



WITH THE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW

Why would anyone spend £1,840 on a pair of torn jeans? Because designer Tom Ford tells them to

SUSANNAH FRANKEL MEETS THE MAN WHO MAKES GUCCI GO, IN THE SATURDAY MAGAZINE

THE BEST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, JAMISH MCRAE, MARK STEEL, DEBORAH ORR, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MILLS KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDRIAS WHITMAN SMITH

Labour plans 'end of welfare state'

CONTROVERSIAL PLANS for a slimmed-down welfare state, in which more people rely on private insurance instead of state hand-outs, have been drawn up by the Labour Party.

The proposals, leaked to *The Independent*, reveal that ministers want those who can afford it to insure themselves against "foreseeable risks".

Left-wingers claim the changes mean "the end of the welfare state" and could eventually result in the jobseeker's allowance (formerly unemployment benefit) being replaced by private insurance.

In the short-term, the Government may reduce state help towards mortgage payments should householders lose their jobs. But ministers insisted last night they would not encourage private health insurance to reduce pressure on the NHS.

Labour's plans for a "new welfare state" will be discussed by its national policy forum in Swansea this weekend before being approved at the party's annual conference in October.

Under the proposals, the new targets set by the Government would include increasing the amount of money people devote to savings and insurance "without increasing the proportion borne by government". They envisage a partnership between the public and private sectors "to en-

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

sure that, wherever possible, people are insured against foreseeable risks and make provision for their retirement".

This weekend's meeting will be told that the Labour leadership has rejected strong pressure from the party's grass roots to uprate the basic state pension in line with earnings rather than prices - a link broken by Margaret Thatcher in 1980. During a consultation exercise, many local Labour parties demanded government action to "stop poorer pensioners falling further behind the rest of society".

Left-wingers led by Baroness Castle of Blackburn, the veteran campaigner and former social services secretary, are planning to fight the welfare plans, but Tony Blair is expected to win approval for them. He will argue they will enable the Government to focus resources on the poorest people and tackle social exclusion.

The new welfare strategy is based heavily on getting people off benefits and into work. Ministers plan further changes to the tax and benefits systems to "make work pay".

One minister said last night: "We want to change the whole culture of the benefits system, away from simply telling people what benefits they are en-

titled to and instead asking them what help they need to become independent."

To allay the left's fears, the Government will set several targets for tackling social problems. They include reducing the number of people of working age and children living in workless households; cutting the number of jobless out of work for more than two years and increasing support from the tax and benefit systems for families with children.

But Mr Blair's critics are worried about his vision of a reduced role for the state. One document to be discussed at this weekend's meeting admits there are limits on public spending because of voters' reluctance to pay higher taxes.

Hinting at more private funding for education, it says that "global economic pressures and modern political realities... reinforce the need to set clear priorities, develop additional sources of funding, and invest public resources in ways that achieve modernisation and reform."

Yesterday Mr Blair told his Cabinet that ministers must focus on "driving through" their policies - in a barely coded message to the faction-fighting blamed for the Government's crisis in the past three weeks.

In a speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research, Mr Blair insisted Labour must appeal to Britain's new, expand-

ed, middle class. "Slowly but surely the old establishment is being replaced by a new, larger, more meritocratic middle class," he said. It would include millions who traditionally might see themselves as working class, but whose ambitions were far broader than those of their parents and grandparents. But the Prime Minister rejected left-wing criticism that his appeal to "middle England" meant ignoring the poor. "Far from abandoning our traditional support, we are saying that in a modern Britain everyone must have the chance to fulfil their potential, whatever their background, age, sex or race."

Mr Blair told his critics Labour must "take the people" with it as it builds a new consensus. "There would be no point to our victory, no real purpose to our Government, if it was simply to be followed by defeat and the reversal of what we have achieved. That has been the curse of Labour Governments past."

But Harry Barnes, the Labour MP for Derbyshire North East, said Labour must "ditch" Mr Blair's "third way" strategy. In an article in next week's *Tribune* newspaper, he said the twin objectives - a private enterprise, free market economy and social justice measures - were "entirely incompatible."



Tony Blair, who has been awarded the Charlemagne Prize

Reuters

Blair wins award for services to Europe

BY IMRE KARACS
in Bonn

TONY BLAIR yesterday became the third British prime minister to be awarded the Charlemagne Prize, given in recognition of service to European integration.

The prize, worth DM5,000 (£1,850), is awarded yearly by Aachen, Charlemagne's birthplace. Mr Blair will receive it in May in the cathedral where Charlemagne is buried and where Holy Roman emperors were crowned.

For European statesmen, it is a great honour. Previous winners include Winston Churchill, Edward Heath and Helmut Kohl. Last year's winner was Bronislaw Geremek, Poland's Foreign Minister.

In its citation the committee of prominent Aachen burghers praises Mr Blair for his "active and constructive" role in European integration. "With the change of government in 1997, Britain's attitude to Europe gained a new dynamism. Tony Blair, who already in 1975 voted for Europe in the referendum, is the embodiment of this new and intensive turn towards Europe. From the beginning of his office Tony Blair clearly voiced the Europe-friendly attitude of his government."

He is also praised for the "Third Way", the modernising zeal of his administration, and for bridging the gap between liberalism and socialism.

Tories to ban Scottish and Welsh MPs from English votes

SCOTTISH AND Welsh MPs will be barred from voting on "English-only" affairs in Parliament if the Tories win the next general election.

William Hague will propose the controversial policy next week when he finally unveils his party's answer to Labour's programme of devolution in Scotland and Wales.

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

The Government announced its plans yesterday to recreate a special Commons Committee of the Regions to give English MPs a greater say.

But *The Independent* has learned that the Tories will try to capitalise on what they be-

lieve will be growing discontent among English voters who will feel marginalised by the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

Mr Hague will announce that there should be "country-designated legislation", with bills specifically aimed only at English MPs. "Under this system, you would not get the re-

cent farce of Scottish and Welsh MPs voting to abolish English grammar schools, for example," one senior Tory source said.

The plan will form a centrepiece of the Tory party's answer to the notorious West Lothian question, which suggests that devolution leaves Scottish MPs with a say over English affairs

while English MPs have no rights over Scottish affairs.

The Tories, who have ruled out the idea of an English Parliament and English-only voting days in Parliament, have drawn up the proposal as the best means of preserving the union of the United Kingdom.

Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the House of Com-

mons, said a special Committee of the Regions will be revived under plans to be published in the next few weeks.

The Standing Committee of the English regions last met in 1978 as the Conservatives decided to ignore its existence. The House of Commons modernisation committee will consider Mrs Beckett's proposals.

Mrs Beckett said the membership of the committee was to be decided by MPs. It may even meet in the regions, when they were considering the problems of a particular area, she said.

Liam Fox, the Tory spokesman on constitutional affairs, said that the idea proved that Labour had not

thought through the consequences of its plans for a Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

Liberal Democrat spokesman on the regions, Nick Harvey, welcomed the plan but warned that it was no substitute for devolving real power to regional assemblies across England.

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- having nowhere to sleep tonight

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BRITAIN TODAY

KEY
14 Temperature, °C
30 Wind speed, mph and direction

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25th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

26th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

27th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

28th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

29th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

30th January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

31st January
SE England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Windy with rain and hail fog, but becoming mild. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
West & NE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Mild but very windy with heavy rain soon arriving. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-11°C (48-52°F).

FORECAST
General situation: It will be milder than recently, but dull, wet and very windy across the whole country. Winds will reach gale force across much of the north and west, and along the English Channel. Rain will quickly spread from Scotland and Northern Ireland into England and Wales. Much of it will be heavy, lasting on and off into the evening. The sky will brighten in Scotland and Northern Ireland this afternoon, but there will still be some heavy showers with hail likely.

15th January
SE England, London, SE Anglia: A dry start but some heavy rain this afternoon. A strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
East S & SW England, Channel: Starting dry but rain this afternoon. Mild but very windy with a strong to gale force south-westerly. Max temp 9-12°C (48-54°F).
Wales, Midlands, SE England: Very windy with heavy rain and hail fog. It will become mild but will still feel rather chilly in the strong to gale force south-westerly wind. Max temp 9-1

OFF THE HOOK: THE FIVE OFFICERS WHO BEAR MOST OF THE BLAME

DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT BRIAN WEEDEN

Mr Weedon had been in charge of 60 previous murder investigations. He succeeded Mr Crampton, and headed the investigation for 18 months. But he admitted to the inquiry that he did not meet the Lawrence family until a year after Stephen's murder.

Mr Weedon continued with Mr Crampton's policy of not making ignorant arrests. He told the inquiry that his knowledge of the law was so scant that he had not known that he could make immediate arrests if there were "reasonable grounds for suspicion". Instead, he insisted on waiting until he had firm evidence of guilt.

He accused the Lawrences of being partly responsible for the breakdown of the family liaison process. "It takes two to tango," he said.

Mr Weedon admitted that his investigation had been riddled with "errors and omissions".

Retired in 1994, having put off his leaving date by six months in order to continue the investigation. Otherwise he would also have faced disciplinary charges.



DETECTIVE INSPECTOR BENJAMIN BULLOCK



Mr Weedon's second in command. Mr Bullock showed "little or no interest" in a young man who walked into Eltham police station less than 24 hours after the murder and offered detailed and specific information about the main suspects, according to a junior colleague. The informant went away and police did not speak to him again for another four days.

He admitted he knew that witnesses were being intimidated by associates of Clifford Norris, father of one of the alleged killers, but failed to seek help from the witness protection scheme. Criticised by Det Supt Bill Mellish, who took over from him. Mr Mellish said: "I cannot recall one innovative or positive strategy from DI Bullock."

He was facing seven disciplinary charges, before announcing his retirement this week after 30 years' service.

DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT RODERICK BARKER

Former head of the Flying Squad, and a veteran of more than 200 murder inquiries, he wrote an internal review of the murder investigation for the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon.

The inquiry heard that he was chosen for the job because Sir Paul regarded him as the "creme de la creme" of Scotland Yard officers. His report, which said that all proper lines of inquiry had been followed in the murder investigation, is universally regarded as a whitewash.

Mr Barker admitted that he had left out criticism of officers, because it would damage morale.

His evidence was dramatically interrupted half-way through by Sir William Macpherson, the public inquiry chairman, who said that his "value as a witness and his credibility in vital matters has already been much undermined, for reasons which will be perfectly obvious for anyone here today."

Sir William, referring to Barker's report, added: "Our present view... is that we feel we ought to indicate that this review is likely to be regarded by us as indefensible."

Would be facing disciplinary action, had he not retired.

DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT WILLIAM ILSLEY

The senior detective in overall command of the murder investigation, Mr Ilsley had chalked up nearly 30 years of service at the time of Stephen's death.

He admitted to the inquiry that he had accused the Lawrences of "spreading around" confidential information given to them by police about progress in the case and of undermining the investigation.

After taking over responsibility for family liaison after relations with two officers assigned to the family broke down, he was given a list of suspects by Stephen's mother. She alleges that he screwed up the piece of paper, a claim he denies.

Mr Ilsley's approach was condemned as "reprehensible" by Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrences. Mr Mansfield claimed that he and other senior officers "never intended effective arrests leading to conviction to be achieved".

He would have faced seven charges of neglect of duty, had he not retired in 1995 after 32 years in the force.

Is now director of risk management for Kroll Associates, the private security agency.



DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT IAN CRAMPTON



Mr Crampton headed the investigation for the crucial first 72 hours, during which key evidence was either missed or not acted upon.

He took the vital decision not to arrest any of the five suspects despite a flood of "tip-offs" from the public. At the inquiry, he admitted that he should have arrested them immediately.

Mr Crampton also left misleading notes for his successor, Brian Weedon, in which he stated that there had been no witnesses to the murder and that all the information received by police so far had been anonymous.

In fact, within 48 hours of the stabbing police had been given names of some suspects from nine separate sources, some of which were not anonymous.

He would also have faced neglect charges but retired in 1996 after 30 years' service. Now works for Kroll Associates.

First the murderers walk free. Now the Lawrence police escape justice

THESE ARE the five men who bear the lion's share of responsibility for the failure to bring to justice Stephen Lawrence's racist killers. With four of them already enjoying retirement on full pension, it emerged yesterday that the fifth is to follow suit - meaning that no police officer in the Lawrence case will ever be punished.

Frustrated by the failure of its attempts to bring to book officers in the abortive investigation, the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) called yesterday for changes to the law governing police disciplinary procedures.

Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen Lawrence, reacted with fury when it became clear that every one of the officers who let them down had escaped retribution. They threatened to sue Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

The PCA, which supervised a year-long review of the conduct of the Lawrence case, recommended that five detectives face disciplinary charges. The four most senior officers - Detective Chief Superintendent William Ilsley, Det Supt Brian Weedon, Det Supt Ian Crampton, and Det Chief Supt Roderick Barker - were already retired when the PCA announced its findings.

BY JASON BENNETTO
JOHN DAVISON AND
KATHY MARKS

Had they still been serving in the Metropolitan Police, they would have faced serious disciplinary charges of neglect of duty relating to the investigation of Stephen's murder by a white gang in south-east London in April 1993.

Yesterday it was disclosed that Detective Inspector Ben Bullock, 49, second in command of the murder inquiry, intends to retire rather than face seven similar charges.

It also emerged that the PCA's decision to charge DI Bullock and the other officers was delayed for more than nine months while Scotland Yard argued over the wording of its report.

Peter Moorhouse, chairman of the PCA, the independent organisation that oversees investigations into complaints against the police, said he was "angry and dismayed" that all the senior officers accused of neglect had retired.

DI Bullock will retire at the end of April after 30 years' service with the Met, on an estimated pension of £25,000 a year. He will thus join the growing ranks of officers around the country who have taken early retirement - or stood down on medical grounds - rather than

face disciplinary charges. He is entitled to do so with impunity because he has completed 30 years of service. Once retired, officers are immune from sanction.

The PCA is calling for new legislation that would prevent officers who are facing disciplinary charges from retiring without having their cases heard.

A PCA spokesman said: "Justice needs to be seen to be done - both the officers and members of the public should be given an opportunity for their cases to be heard."

He added: "One has to ask why can officers suddenly announce they are going without facing the disciplinary hearing?"

A Home Office source said that ministers would consider the proposal. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has already spoken out against early retirement by officers who escape justice by this route.

The disciplinary recommendations made by the PCA against the five officers in the Lawrence case were based on the findings of an inquiry by Kent Police into the original investigations of Stephen's murder in 1993.

The PCA's verdict, announced earlier this week, had been anxiously awaited by the Lawrence family, since it offered the last chance for any officers to be punished for the

litany of incompetence that characterised the investigation.

The PCA also recommended that three serving officers should receive "formal advice" - in other words, a verbal warning - for their failure to keep a log of events at the scene of the stabbing.

Chief Supt Christopher Benn, the most senior officer at the scene of the murder, admitted to the inquiry that he did not consult intelligence records for information about potential racist suspects.

Insp Stephen Groves, who was in charge of a Territorial Support Group unit at the scene, suspected that Stephen's friend, Duwayne Brooks, might have committed the murder. Acting Insp Ian Little, who dealt with Stephen's parents at the hospital on the night of the killing, showed gross insensitivity towards them.

The public inquiry, chaired by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, will go much further than the PCA in assigning blame. As disclosed in *The Independent* last month, the draft of Sir William's report contains scathing criticism of 23 officers.

The final report is due out next month. All witnesses had immunity from disciplinary proceedings that might have arisen as a result of evidence given at the hearings.

Mrs Lawrence expressed

her frustration yesterday at the disclosure of DI Bullock's plans.

"When my son was killed, nobody was there to catch the killers, and now disciplinary action actually can be taken after nearly six years, he ups and retires and still gets his full pension - and yet we are still here suffering."

Imran Khan, the family's solicitor, said that one of the options being considered by the Lawrences was to sue Sir Paul Condon for neglect of duty. Other possibilities included suing individual officers.

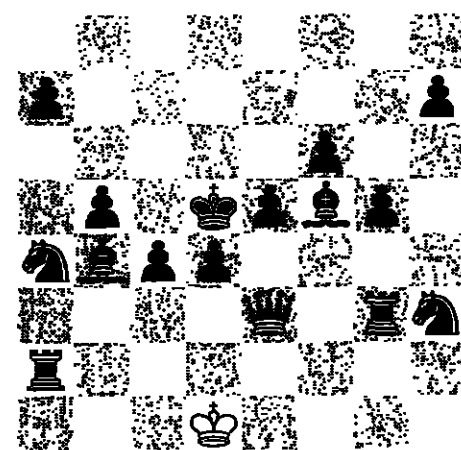
Sir Paul said yesterday: "I can understand the distress of Mr and Mrs Lawrence but it is now nearly six years since

Stephen's tragic death and murder, and a number of officers in the case have retired. The officer referred to is now at the point where he is legally entitled to decide when he leaves the service."

"As the law currently stands, he was legally entitled to use his right to retire, and that's what he has done."

A spokeswoman for the Home Office said: "We can understand and sympathise with the sense of frustration of the Lawrence family as no one is to face disciplinary procedures as a result of the Police Complaints Authority investigation of the Stephen Lawrence case."

easy@demon[no.2]



black to win in as many moves as it takes.

Court will decide fate of missing foster girls

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
AND GARY FINN

THE MISSING foster parents Jeff and Jenny Bramley were told last night they could keep the two girls they abducted if a court agreed. Apparently succumbing to popular support for the couple, Cambridgeshire social services reversed its earlier position and asked the couple to come home.

The local authority said it would allow a judge - rather than its own social workers - to decide if the Bramleys were suitable parents for half-sisters Jade, five, and Hannah, three. It added that it would not oppose a new application to adopt the girls.

Mr and Mrs Bramley have been on the run for the past four months, disappearing hours before a meeting at which they were due to hand back the children they had looked after for the previous six months.

Cambridgeshire social services department has said it con-



Jeff and Jenny Bramley with Jade, 5, and Hannah, 3

sidered the couple unsuitable parents for the girls, partly because they were too strict. Council officials have maintained that their decision to take Jade and Hannah away was correct.

But last night, in an open letter to the couple, the social services director, Liz Railton, said: "I know the last four months must have been extremely difficult for you all, but it cannot

be in Jade and Hannah's long-term interests for you to stay away any longer. I am therefore proposing a way that will enable you to come home quickly."

She said that in the long term the future of the children would be left up to the courts. A spokeswoman added: "In the short term they can keep the children, providing the court gives them the OK to do so."

The move was at least partly prompted by the first stage of legal action by Jade and Hannah's natural mother, Jackie Bennett, who hopes to gain some access to her children.

Raphael Silver, her solicitor, said: "On Jackie's behalf, we have today started legal proceedings, the purpose of which is to ask a court to decide what is in the best interests of Jade and Hannah. She is confident, that the court... will take all relevant matters into consideration. Jackie hopes that by taking this action, Mr and Mrs Bramley will feel more capable of returning the children safely and speedily."

There have been a number of apparent sightings of the family, the most recent being 10 days ago on a steam train in North Yorkshire. Earlier this week the couple sent a letter to newspapers and a television station, pleading to be allowed to keep the children.

Leading article, Review, page 3

id and card.

SEVENTY-ONE YEAR OLD MAN, NORMAN, received a diagnosis of dementia in which would have left him dependent for the rest of his life on his long-suffering wife, who was the real cause of his problems was discovered - he stated.

The man, who was a life-long smoker and had chronic bronchitis, was admitted to King's Hill Hospital in Sutton in August, Nottinghamshire, because he was having hallucinations during the night and was continuing during the day. Doctors could find nothing wrong with him, apart from the bronchitis and decided he had dementia. When a brain scan showed mild atrophy. They were about to send him home when his wife

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صكنا من الاصل

Briton abandoned in jungle survives for 22 days



The hazardous inhospitable highlands of Papua New Guinea Michael Yamashita

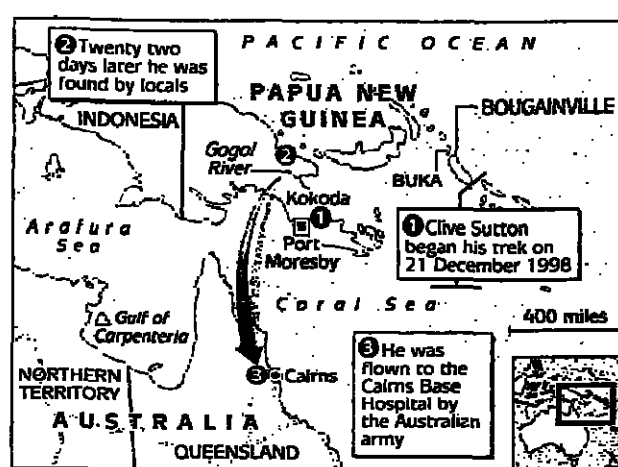
By JAKE LYNCH
in Sydney
AND CLARE GARNER

PAPUA NEW GUINEA is described by the Foreign Office as an island that poses a "constant threat of danger". British tourist Clive Sutton found this out in a manner he will never forget. Abandoned by a local guide he had hired for a perilous jungle trek, he was forced to fend for himself in the tropical wilderness for 22 days.

Mr Sutton had set out on the Kokoda trail, a 150-mile route which crosses the eastern end of the country, on 21 December. But one day into the trek his guide left him.

Twenty-two days later, Mr Sutton, 30, from Bristol, was discovered by a local family walking along the trail, where more than 2,000 Australians and 13,000 Japanese died in combat during the Second World War. For more than three weeks he had survived on rehydrated noodles and fruit he had foraged in bushland known to be one of the most inhospitable parts of the world.

Yesterday, as Mr Sutton was recovering in a hospital in Aus-



tralia, his father revealed that he had left Britain partly to forget a car crash on Christmas Day 1992 in which a mother and a young man were killed. Mr Sutton, who was more than two times over the legal alcohol limit when the accident happened, was sentenced to four years in prison after admitting to two charges at Bristol Crown Court of causing death by dangerous driving.

It is not known why Mr Sutton's guide left him stranded, but Jennifer Cox, of guidebook publishers Lonely Planet, sug-

gested he may have been a local man who then robbed him and ran off. She added that now was the worst time of year to trek in Papua New Guinea. "It is the monsoon season at the moment, which makes it dangerously muddy and hazardous. It is very hot and humid and there are ravines full of water with leeches and malaria-carrying mosquitoes," she said.

Mr Sutton was "very, very lucky indeed to be alive", she added. "Papua New Guinea is a tribal society and it is not unusual to come across different



tribes fighting each other with bows and arrows. There are also bandits along the way. It is always advisable to get an official guide who knows exactly what they are doing."

Word of Mr Sutton's whereabouts passed from village to village and eventually reached a Salvation Army officer in the capital, Port Moresby. A helicopter crew from the Australian army found him lying in a creek bed near the Gogol River, clutching a half-litre bottle of fetid water.

When rescuers reached him on Wednesday afternoon, he was in too poor condition to be moved. According to yesterday's edition of the *Brisbane Courier-Mail*, the helicopter pilot, Lewis Beech, said Mr Sutton had "the worst case of tropical foot-rot (caused when blisters burst and go septic) I've ever seen." He is also suffering from malaria and dehydration.

But by the time he was stretchered from an ambulance at the end of his journey to hospital in Cairns, in northern Queensland, Mr Sutton was fit enough to wave at waiting news crews.

A Foreign Office spokesman confirmed Mr Sutton was rescued from the Highlands in Papua New Guinea after his guide abandoned him. "We are very grateful to the Australian authorities for the rescue. The High Commissioner has informed Mr Sutton's next of kin and we are following his progress via the Consular General in Brisbane," he said.

The spokesman added that while the Foreign Office did not go as far as advising against non-essential travel to Papua New Guinea, it did warn that the law and order situation remained "extremely poor".

Legal aid 'only for probable winners'

TOUGH NEW rules are to be introduced to limit the number of legal aid cases and concentrate resources on actions that are likely to succeed.

The new Funding Code will apply a set mathematical formula to cases and will be used by the new Legal Services Commission to administer the legal aid system.

The code, which is being set up as part of the new Access to Justice legislation, is based on the principle that "legal aid should only be granted in circumstances where a case is sufficiently strong that a private paying client would invest his or her money in the litigation".

In cases which are assessed as having a very good or 80 per cent chance of success, applicants will be granted legal aid, provided the estimated damages they are likely to win exceed the estimated costs of the case.

Those cases which have a good or 60 to 80 per cent chance of success qualify only if the estimated damages won will be at least three times the likely costs of the case.

Where the chances of success are only moderate or 50 to 60 per cent, the applicant must be expected to win damages more than four times the amount spent in bringing the case.

If the case has less than an even chance of success the applicant will be refused and would have to seek a lawyer who would be willing to take the case on a conditional fee basis.

With the annual bill for legal aid running at £1,670m, the Government is anxious to avoid unnecessary waste of public funds.

Launching a consultation paper on the code yesterday,

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

Steve Orchard, chief executive of the Legal Aid Board which will be replaced by the new commission, said the code would ensure value for money for the taxpayer. He said: "Cases will have to satisfy the new stringent criteria to receive public funding. Those whose cases do not, will know their cases are not strong enough or are of lower priority or are more suitable for being funded in the private sector by conditional fee agreements with lawyers."

He added that research by the board had shown the chances of success of a case could be estimated in advance with a good deal of accuracy.

But Vicki Chapman, policy director of the Legal Action Group, which campaigns for equal access to justice, said the code was likely to cause many deserving cases to be denied legal aid. She said: "People bringing these claims are by definition of limited resources. Relatively small amounts of damages could be of enormous importance to them and demanding that they win three or four times their costs is being unduly restrictive."

Richard Miller, a solicitor and chairman of the Legal Aid Practitioners Group, said the calculations were likely to be unfairly stacked against the applicant. He said: "The estimated costs would include the amount incurred going to court, even though many of these cases are settled well before they reach that stage."

A spokesman for the Law Society said: "We fear this is just a mechanism for turning down more people for legal aid."

Dementia? No, it's just snoring

A 65-YEAR-OLD MAN narrowly escaped a diagnosis of dementia which would have left him dependent for the rest of his life on his long-suffering wife, when the real cause of his problems was discovered - he snored.

The man, who was a life-long smoker and had chronic bronchitis, was admitted to King's Mill Hospital in Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, because he was having hallucinations during the night and was confused during the day. Doctors could find nothing wrong with him, apart from the bronchitis and decided he had dementia after a brain scan showed mild atrophy. They were about to send him home when his wife

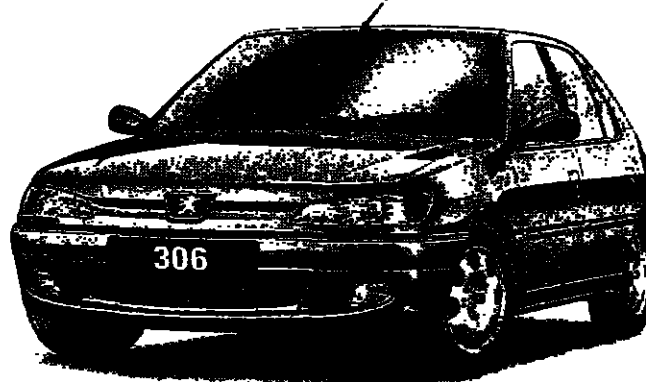
BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

mentioned he was a snorer.

His snoring was loud and included periods of choking and breath-holding - symptoms of a common disorder called sleep apnoea. Tissue at the back of the throat collapses and blocks the airway, which reduces oxygen levels in the blood.

In the man's case, the sleep apnoea combined with his bronchitis caused the oxygen level in his blood to fall very low during the night. Doctors arranged for him to have oxygen in bed through a mask and his hallucinations and confusion rapidly improved.

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'Delighted' captive flies in

Veter
of off
treat

He said that he had been told that the man was a member of the Communist Party and that he had been working for the government. He said that he had been told that the man was a member of the Communist Party and that he had been working for the government.



Shaun Rydman, 30, is a member of the band The Rasmus.

that if I was injured serving in the military, I would receive proper medical care. The medical care I received from the military and the Veterans Affairs was nothing more than cursory clinics. Like thousands of other Gulf Veterans, Mr. Fushing, who served from a home state, was in severe pain in his joints, said he was diagnosed by the Government as disabled by the Gulf War knowledge Gulf War Syndrome and not to pay for the necessary medical treatment.

He is one of the 70 veterans who have handed back the Congressional medals in protest at the Government's failure to order a public inquiry.

After returning from the Gulf conflict, Mr Fushing, now

Study debunks Gulf War illness

By JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

THE MOST definitive study yet of soldiers returning from the 1991 Iraqi war has failed to find evidence of a Gulf War Syndrome. But British soldiers who engaged a foreign tyrant began to complain of breathlessness, grinding fatigue, irritability, headache, insomnia, and paraesthesias, rendering 70 per cent of them unfit for further duty.

The finding, by researchers at a London medical school, provides the first clear proof that going to the Gulf did damage the health of soldiers – even though it has proved impossible to identify any specific illness or any specific cause. The results showed they suffered two to three times more illness than the other groups.

Gulf War Syndrome has been the subject of intense controversy, with veterans' associations on both sides of the Atlantic accusing the military of ignoring the evidence and the plight of sufferers.

More than \$115 million (£72m) has been spent researching the syndrome in the United States alone. The latest £1m study, published in two papers in *The Lancet*, was funded by the US Department of Defense to see if other countries' experience had been the same as America's. Over 50,000 British troops served in the Gulf and the findings are based on a random sample of 3,000.

The symptoms they reported – which ranged from mild fatigue and headaches to severe urinary and sexual problems and double vision – were little different from those reported by soldiers involved in every other war in the past 100 years. It was the scale of those affected that was different – but that could be because so few Allies were killed in the Gulf War there was more opportunity to focus on the problems of the survivors.

Professor Simon Wessely, consultant psychiatrist at King's College Medical School, who led the study with Profes-

CONFLICT SYMPTOMS

Report on First World War veterans, *The Lancet*: "Over 50,000 British, Canadian and American troops returned from battle as changed men. Once-vital young men who left to engage a foreign tyrant began to complain of breathlessness, grinding fatigue, irritability, headache, insomnia, and paraesthesias, rendering 70 per cent of them unfit for further duty."

Report on Gulf War veterans, published in latest issue of *The Lancet*:

"Veterans... report higher rates of many symptoms and disorders and have a decreased perception of wellbeing... About three times more likely to fulfil criteria for chronic fatigue, post-traumatic stress reaction, or the CDC multi-syndrome criteria."

sor Tony David, said the most likely explanation for the findings was that the experience of war damaged health independent of any injury suffered in fighting. Although this might seem obvious, the carnage of previous wars could have obscured a transparent truth.

One of the strengths of the study was that it compared soldiers in the Gulf, who fought battles with the enemy and were exposed to the threat of chemical and biological weapons, with those in Bosnia, who were involved in skirmishes but did not face the same multiplicity of hazards. A third group were on active service but remained at home.

Professor Wessely added: "The Gulf was more hazardous. Modern warfare is extremely dangerous physically and psychologically to the individual. Although we may not be able to prevent these effects, we should be better prepared to monitor (the soldiers) and care for them afterwards. We have to expect that people involved in modern wars will be at risk from these sorts of illnesses."

Speculation about the causes of illness among Gulf veterans has centred on chemical and biological warfare and the measures, including vaccines, administered to protect soldiers against it.

Although both Bosnian and Gulf soldiers received multiple vaccinations against common infections, only the Gulf group was vaccinated against the biological threats of anthrax and plague – 70 per cent against the

first and 35 per cent against the second.

The researchers found those who had the biological vaccines suffered more ill health but the effect was less than that of drinking local water. Those who had multiple vaccines also reported more symptoms, but only in the Gulf. The researchers suggest the explanation could be a mix of immunological and psychological effects.

Flight Lieutenant John Nichol, chairman of the Gulf War Veterans' branch of the Royal British Legion, called for a public inquiry. He said: "We welcome this report. It at last confirms what we have been saying for seven years. It is sad that it has taken an American-funded study to prove their claims were genuine." He added: "Now we need to know why they are ill so that we can help them and ensure this doesn't happen again."



Allied troops in Iraq in 1991. Gulf veterans have suffered more illnesses than compatriots at home Mike Moore

Veteran sick of official treatment

WHEN SHAUN RUSLING received a medal for his part in Operation Desert Storm he was a proud man. As a paramedic attached to The Parachute Regiment just miles outside Iraq, he helped sick soldiers who could have died. Now, eight years after the end of the conflict, he feels sick – debilitated by illness and disgusted with the Government.

"I have had no medical treatment from the Ministry of Defence whatsoever," he said yesterday. "All I have ever had from them is confirmation of health problems which were identified by civilian doctors. I feel betrayed."

"It was naive of me to think

By LINUS GREGORIADIS

aged 39, had a physical and mental breakdown. In 1993 post-traumatic stress disorder and depression were diagnosed. "I was suffering severe pain in my feet, hips and spine," he said. "I was chronically fatigued and had heavy sweats. I went to the medical assessment programme run by the Ministry of Defence, which just confirmed I was suffering from these conditions."

Mr Rusling, from Hull, also has osteoporosis, a bone thinning disease, fibromyalgia, a condition characterised by pains all over the body and chronic irritable bowel syndrome. He says these problems are typical among the unwell Gulf War veterans.

Mr Rusling, who has an 80 per cent "war" pension and a 100 per cent "disabled" pension, says that it is clear to him why the Government will not acknowledge Gulf War Syndrome. "It is cheaper for [the ministry] to refute the problem," he said. "If they accept that there is a syndrome, large numbers of veterans could come forward. They wouldn't want to be liable for medical care for all of us. There is also the issue of compensation. It's cheaper to let us die."

He says that the ministry's stance is made more infuriating by a diagnosis he received last year. A consultant neurologist at the Hull Royal Infirmary said that he had Gulf War Syndrome.

Mr Rusling says his life has been devastated by his health problems. "I'm now faced with going into the second part of my life with a severe disability."

But it is not all bad news. His wife, Maria, has just given birth to a healthy girl. Aware that many Gulf veterans have had children born with defects, Mr Rusling said that they had thought long and hard before deciding to have a child. "It was a great relief. She was born with everything she should have and nothing she shouldn't," he said.



Shaun Rusling: Condition no better

that if I was injured serving my country that I would receive proper medical care. The medicals I received from the Ministry of Defence were nothing more than cursory clinics."

Like thousands of other Gulf veterans, Mr Rusling, who suffers from a bone disease and severe pain in his joints, said he was dismayed by the Government's continued failure to acknowledge Gulf War Syndrome and to pay for the necessary medical treatment.

He is one of the 70 veterans who have handed back their medals in protest at the Government's failure to order a public inquiry.

After returning from the Gulf conflict, Mr Rusling, now

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Tories back teachers' union in curious role reversal

THE WEEKEND came early to the Commons since most MPs had already bunked off after the last vote on Wednesday evening. Yesterday, the Commons began the experiment of Thursday morning sessions, but few members bothered to turn up for education and employment questions. While the Government managed to summon 50 of its loyal robots the Tories mustered just 12.

Role reversal seems to have overtaken both front benches with David Willetts, the Tory education spokesman, speaking out for the National Union of Teachers, opposing the Government's return to traditional education methods. His

intervention, and that of his deputy, Teresa May, drew almost exclusively on reports, surveys and quotes from this last bastion of restrictive union practices.

Meanwhile, the Secretary of State, David Blunkett, was revelling in the fact that he is hated by teachers almost as much as Kenneth Baker was when he began the process of wreaking havoc on the educational establishment over a decade ago. In response to Phil Willis (Lib Dem, Harrogate and Knaresborough) who asked about the effects of staging teachers' pay awards, Mr Blunkett positively glowered as he replied: "The impact on

teachers has been generally to irritate them."

In Mr Blunkett's onward march back to the basics of the glory days of blackboard and chalk, streaming, and multiplication tables, there is little opportunity for trendy Labour MPs to participate in question time without appearing disloyal. But fashionable Ben Bradshaw (Lab, Exeter) bridged the divide between Old and New trends by suggesting that "citizenship" be taught in schools. Quoting a letter from a nine-year-old, he said he wanted schools to teach democracy and politics. Mr Bradshaw still suffers from the trendy left agenda, prob-

THE SKETCH



MICHAEL BROWN

ably instilled in him 10 years ago when he worked for the BBC. The Commons moved on to the pick 'n' mix fashion of business

questions presided over by the ice-cool, charming Margaret Beckett, Leader of the House. Anything goes during this playtime opportunity for MPs to flick ink pellets at the Government. Gordon Prentice (Lab, Pendle) and Dennis Skinner (Lab, Bolsover) both used the chance to denounce the Liberal Democrat-Labour discussions on co-operation. Mr Skinner recalled the pact during the Seventies Labour government when "it all ended in tears because they couldn't stand the heat".

A few Tory troublemakers led by Julie Kirkbride (C, Bromsgrove) ran over to the playground sandpit to throw handfuls of mud and dirt at

the Government over the Mandelson affair. Patrick Nicholls (C, Teignbridge) wanted a debate on building society lending practices while John Taylor (C, Solihull) called for the United States-style impeachment.

By lunchtime, the House was empty except for a dozen members of the Public Accounts Committee who stayed to listen to an erudite and elegant speech from one of Parliament's newest feared and revered grandees, David Davis (C, Haltempre and Howden), the committee's chairman.

Once Mr Davis was a young whipper-snapper junior whip with a menacing look but now as chair-

man of the PAC he has real power, causing many a permanent secretary to quiver in the face of his polite but menacing questions.

The debate on the Public Accounts Committee ended early. The new Thursday arrangements the House has foolishly approved have ensured, on the basis of yesterday's experience, that unless there is controversial business to detain MPs they will all skive off early in the week. That, no doubt, was the motive behind the Labour majority on the modernisation committee as they hammered yet another nail into the coffin of the parliamentary scrutiny of ministers.

Lib-Lab ties extended to foreign policy

TONY BLAIR defied criticism from Labour MPs by agreeing yesterday to extend closer co-operation with Paddy Ashdown and the Liberal Democrats to European common foreign and defence policy.

Closer relations with the Government also caused rumblings of discontent from former Liberals who do not want to see their party entering any pacts with the Blair government. "We are giving Paddy a sweetie, but this is the last example of co-operation we will allow," said a veteran politician. Mr Blair privately told Liberal Democrats at a meeting of the joint co-ordinating committee in the cabinet room that there were other areas where he wanted to see co-operation extended. It is believed this includes social security policy.

Mr Ashdown angered members of the parliamentary party by "bouncing" them into closer co-operation last year, and some MPs are forming two rival camps behind Charles Kennedy, a former Liberal Democrat president, and Simon Hughes, one of the most outspoken critics of closer co-operation.

Critics fear being smothered by the embrace of the Government. But Mr Ashdown, who attacked Mr Blair over the NHS this week, is keeping his critics in check by insisting there is no carte blanche agreement for co-operation with the Government.

"It is being tightly limited to areas where we can show that it has an advantage, and where

PARTY CO-OPERATION

BY COLIN BROWN AND SARAH SCHAEFER

we can deliver results," said a source close to the Liberal Democrat leader.

Mr Ashdown knows he is playing for high stakes in seeking closer co-operation with Mr Blair, short of a coalition. In a letter last month he told Mr

Skinner: Said 1970s pact had 'ended in tears'

Blair his position would be made untenable unless he could deliver some form of proportional representation for the coming European elections. He had to settle for the closed-list system, which yesterday reached the Statute Book.

Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown have agreed to put off a referendum on proportional representation until it could be won. Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, former SDP leader and chairman

of the Government's independent commission on the voting system, yesterday said it may not be held until after the next general election, in spite of the Labour manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on PR.

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, opposes any move towards coalition but has told friends he is prepared to see co-operation with the Liberal Democrats where it makes sense.

Mr Blair faced renewed criticism from his own back benches. Gordon Prentice, MP for Pendle, said the party was getting "very weary about endless speculation about Lib-Labbery" and asked what precisely Mr Blair had in his mind.

"Can you ask to prevail upon him to come to the Commons and make a statement about this deal?" he said to Margaret Beckett, the Leader of the Commons.

Dennis Skinner, MP for Bolsover, said the Lib-Lab pact in the 1970s had "ended in tears" because the Liberals had "ratted" on it. "We don't want a repeat performance; sack the lot," he said.

Pointing to differences between Labour and the Liberal Democrats over a range of issues such as devolution, Lords reform, defence and foreign policy, he added: "Some of us are fed up to the back teeth of the Liberals wanting their cake and eating it. It is high time a message was passed to the Prime Minister and anybody else that it is time they put a stop to it."



Skinner: Said 1970s pact had 'ended in tears'



William Hague, the Conservative leader, and Ann Widdecombe, the party's health spokeswoman, visiting the surgical training unit at St Mary's Hospital in west London yesterday

Fur Bill set to become law

BACKBENCH BILLS

BY SARAH SCHAEFER

Political Correspondent

NEW LEGISLATION including moves to prevent the keeping of animals only for the commercial value of their fur is likely to become law this parliamentary session after several backbench Bills received government support.

The Fur Farming (Prohibition) Bill introduced by Maria Eagle, the Labour MP for Liverpool Garston, was the second in the top seven of Private Members' Bills. It received its first formal reading this week.

Usually backbench Bills have little chance of becoming law because of lack of parliamentary time if opposed but this session many have government support.

A Bill to tighten protection of children by drawing up a list of people unsuitable to work with them heads the queue of proposed laws, introduced by Debra Shipley, the Labour MP for Stourbridge.

Labour's Eric Clarke (Midlothian) seeks, through his Mental Health (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, to clarify powers of hospital managers to hold or dispose of patients' property.

The Referendums Bill, introduced by Tory Andrew Rothman (Blaby), aims to ensure public money and broadcasting time are fairly divided between the two sides in such poll campaigns.

Labour's Gordon Prentice (Pendle) wants a Right to Roam Bill, and Tory Simon Burns (Chelmsford W) calls for a tighter clamp on soccer hooliganism. The Liberal Democrat Mark Oaten (Winchester) is introducing an adoption Bill for children and parents in more than one country.

Use of necklocks on child prisoners broke the rules

NECK AND WRIST holds were used by staff on children at Britain's first jail for young offenders in a flagrant breach of the prison's rules, according to a damning official report released yesterday.

An inspection team from the Department of Health's Social Services Inspectorate found that the privately run Medway Secure Training Centre, which caters for 40 children aged from 12 to 14, was in a state of "crisis". The Home Office minister Paul Boateng made a scathing attack on Rebound, the Group 4 subsidiary that runs the jail. "My officials and I will not tolerate further failures. Rebound are in no doubt about this and recognise the serious fail-

ures of the past are quite unacceptable."

But none of the staff at Medway is to be disciplined and Mr Boateng said the Government is to press ahead with plans to open more centres for offenders aged 12 to 14.

The inspectors reported that Rebound had recruited a 12-strong team - known as the "Restraint Squad" - to keep order after a series of resignations caused a serious staff shortage. They noted: "We observed instances when wrist and necklocks were used... These methods have been crit-

icised by the medical profession as being potentially injurious... They were also in contravention of the [centre's] rules."

It was confirmed yesterday that there were 150 "restraints" in six months. Nine of the restraints led to complaints being referred to the child protection team at Medway social services department, though there were no prosecutions.

Nevertheless, the inspectors said: "The over-reliance on the use of restraint and single separation as primary means of control and the fact that trainees felt aggrieved and powerless confirmed them in a 'victim' role. This perception enabled them to

justify their destructive behaviour."

Staff had been the victims of 97 assaults, of which 26 needed medical treatment.

Frances Crook, director of the Howard League, said yesterday: "Locking children up in a prison has been shown to make them more aggressive and to entrench offending behaviour. Medway has been seen to be a failure. It fails children, the public and the taxpayer."

Rebound said it had put in place an action plan that was either implementing or had already implemented changes recommended by the inspectors. These include changes in training and education, as well as a redesign of the building.

'Keep gay ban in armed forces'

PROPOSALS to lift the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces are attacked today by a former air chief marshal with the backing of a Tory MP in a pamphlet, *Not Fit to Fight*.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage says lifting the ban on homosexuals - expected after a ruling in the European Court of Human Rights - will reduce combat readiness.

The pamphlet published by the Social Affairs Unit also argues against women soldiers. It says the Battle of Britain might have resulted in a different

outcome if pilots were mothers with children in RAF canteens.

Julian Brazier, a Tory MP, says the ignorance of MPs has allowed "subversive" change to the armed forces to go ahead without challenge.

Not Fit to Fight - the cultural subversion of the armed forces in Britain and America, Social Affairs Unit, 314-322 Regent Street, London, W1R 5AB. £11.95 plus £1 p.p.

New move on age of consent Bill

PLANS to lower the age of consent for homosexuals to 16 will be re-introduced in the Commons six months after peers overwhelmingly voted against them.

Ministers will seek to push through the age of consent package as part of the Sexual Offences Bill, to be debated on 25 January, which will include guidelines to protect youths who are in care, boarding schools or the Armed Forces. They hope statutory safeguards will persuade peers to bow to concerns about young people who could have their

trust abused. Peers voted down the measure as part of the Crime and Disorder Bill in July, despite the clear backing to make the age of consent the same as for heterosexuals. The three main party leaders and almost all of the Cabinet voted in favour of the change.

However, peers argued that they had the right to defy the Commons because they had a moral right because this was an issue of conscience that crossed party lines.

THE HOUSE



Watchdog's powers questioned

ELIZABETH FILKIN, the new Parliamentary Standards Commissioner should not necessarily be given the power to investigate ministers' financial affairs, Commons Leader Margaret Beckett said.

Schools must teach citizenship

A GREATER emphasis on citizenship lessons in schools will improve pupils' understanding of political issues when they come to vote in referendums, said the Education minister Charles Clarke.

Parliament visit 'costs too much'

MPs JOINTLY condemned plans to charge visitors to the Houses of Parliament up to £7 during the summer recess.

Today's Business: Neither House is sitting today.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mis-sold pension payouts rising

LARGE FINANCE firms slow to compensate victims of pensions mis-selling have now resolved 94 per cent of priority cases, the Treasury Economic Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, announced.

£1bn in public money saved

ABOUT £1BN of public money has been saved over the past three years by the public finances watchdog, the National Audit Office, MPs were told.

Asylum-seekers' bill increases

ASYLUM-SEEKERS claimed £35m in benefit payments in the last financial year. The benefit bill for asylum seekers has risen by £25 million compared with 1995.

Charges on BSE controls

THE GOVERNMENT is to start charging for enforcing anti-BSE controls on slaughterhouses, the Agriculture Minister, Nick Brown, announced.

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Businesses shun education zones

EDUCATION ACTION zones, to be backed by the Prime Minister today as "testbeds of radical ideas", have raised less than a third of the £19m they need from private companies.

Tony Blair will announce the creation of another 15 zones, despite zone leaders' insistence that only a handful of the first 25 zones have succeeded in raising the private funds required. Each has received £750,000 from the taxpayer but

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

must raise £250,000 from business. A central pool of private funds on which hard-pressed zones could draw, promised in April, has not materialised.

So far the zones have raised just £5m, most of it "in kind" - as the rules allow - rather than in cash.

The Education Department said last night that it had only

expected them to raise from this school year, which ends in the summer. "So we're ahead of the game," a spokeswoman said.

But ministers have recognised the difficulties some zones are experiencing by appointing Sir Cyril Taylor, architect of the last government's city technology colleges, to help them raise private investment.

Ian Harrison, director of education at Newham and secretary of the local education

authorities' action zone network, said although Newham had secured plenty of private funding, only about half a dozen of the first 25 zones had strong backing from the private sector. "In some cases it isn't obvious why large firms should invest in zones. The private sector interest suggests there may not be enough private money to sustain more. The Government should be looking at a more diverse model," Mr Harrison said.

Mark Patison, director of education at Blackburn and the network's chairman, said: "Most zones are able to raise private support 'in kind'. Cash support is not essential but it makes a great deal of difference if you have some money you can use for any purpose. Some of the 'in-kind' support is a bit peripheral." He said some zones were receiving commitments for one year only.

Yet the zones appear to be

enthusiastic and optimistic. David Bell, director of education in Newcastle, said his zone had about £200,000, almost all of it "in kind", for the first year. "We remain pretty upbeat but the fund-raising has been harder than we thought. We have a very good education business partnership here and companies are already putting a lot of time and effort into education," he said.

Nottingham zone, which

started this month, has private funding for the first three months of this year.

Barnsley, which began in September, has both cash and equipment but is still trying to raise money from potential supporters.

Mr Blair is expected to announce today that he wants to make it easier for parents, teachers and community groups to run zones, in response to criticism that the

existing 25 are dominated by local authorities and are "not radical enough".

Margaret Murray, head of the Confederation of British Industry, said: "Businesses shouldn't be asked for cash for the technology block or the basics of education, which should be funded by the taxpayer. They should be backing imaginative schemes, like summer schools, with measurable objectives."



Shortlisted for the best-actress prize in the Laurence Olivier Awards are Dame Diana Rigg, Nicole Kidman and Dame Judi Dench

Olivier awards pit Kidman against dames

THE HOLLYWOOD star Nicole Kidman will have to compete against two theatrical dames for one of the highest honours in British theatre.

Kidman, who appeared in David Hare's *The Blue Room* and was described by one critic as "pure theatrical Viagra", has been shortlisted for the best-actress prize on 12 February in the Laurence Olivier Awards alongside Dame Diana Rigg (*Phedre and Britannicus*)

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

and Dame Judi Dench (*Philomena*). Two other acclaimed British actresses, Eileen Atkins (*The Unexpected Man*), and Sinead Cusack (*Our Lady of Sligo*) are also shortlisted.

Hollywood makes its presence felt in the best-actor category too. Kevin Spacey, star of the film *The Usual Suspects*, is shortlisted for his stage role in

The Iceman Cometh at the Old Vic last year and will face competition from Michael Gambon (*The Unexpected Man*), Iain Glen (*The Blue Room*), Jim Norton (*The Weir*) and David Suchet (*Amadeus*).

But the shortlists are dominated by the National Theatre's *Oldfathers*, which has nine nominations, including outstanding musical production and best director for Trevor Nunn. *The Blue Room*,

Hare's adaptation of Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, follows with six nominations, including best new play, best director, best actor and best actress. Conon McPherson's *The Weir* is nominated for best new play and best director.

One of the most interesting and ironic nominations is for outstanding achievement in opera. Nominees include the orchestra of the Royal Opera House "for its consistently out-

standing musicianship". Last year it was threatened with cancellation of this year's season because of Royal Opera House cutbacks, a threat now amended to playing a shorter season.

In the nominations for best play, *Blue Room* will compete against *Copenhagen*, Michael Frayn's meditation on the origins of the H-bomb; *The Weir*; McPherson's lyrical examination of love and loss in rural Ire-

land; and *The Unexpected Man*, which tells of the chance meeting on a train between a well-known writer and a fan.

Whistle down the Wind, Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical, which received a lukewarm reception from the critics, is nominated in the best new musical category.

It competes against *Remt*, Jonathan Larson's hip reworking of the *La Bohème* story, *Saturday Night Fever*,

the first stage version of the 1977 film, and *Kat and the Kings*, a high-energy South African import. The entire South African cast of *Kat and the Kings* received a collective nomination for best actor in a musical.

In the outstanding musical production category, all the works nominated are revivals of Broadway musicals. *Oldfathers* is joined by *Into the Woods*, *Annie* and *Show Boat*.

Babies at risk if mothers worry

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

A MOTHER'S psychological state can influence the growth of her unborn baby, doctors have found.

Worry during pregnancy may hinder the development of the baby by restricting the blood supply to the womb, according to a study. The effect could be important because smaller babies are at greater risk of developing chronic diseases in later life.

It is known that anxious women tend to have smaller babies. Researchers at Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital, west London, believe they can explain why. They studied 100 pregnant women and found those with high levels of anxiety as measured by a standard psychological test also had abnormal patterns of blood flow through the uterine arteries, seen on ultrasound.

Dr Jeronima Teixeira and colleagues say in the *British Medical Journal* that the most likely explanation for the mechanism is that high levels of adrenaline in the blood restrict blood flow to the uterus (and other organs) to ensure a maximum supply for the muscles - the "fight or flight" effect.

"It may be that in times of stress the mother has evolved to protect herself at the expense of her foetus," they write.

Top chefs sued for £1m over restaurant sabotage

GORDON RAMSAY, the chef notorious for his explosively bad temper, is being sued for an estimated £1m after walking out of his job and taking most of the staff with him.

Mr Ramsay, who was head chef of the double Michelin-starred London restaurant L'Aubergine, and Marcus Wareing, who was head chef at L'Oranger, also in London, are being sued over a dispute in which staff quit and police were called to investigate claims of theft and sabotage.

Yesterday Mr Ramsay, a former Glasgow Rangers footballer, and Mr Wareing said that they would fight the action vigorously.

In the High Court writ issued by A-Z Restaurants, which owns both premises, the two are accused of involvement in £30,000 of alleged sabotage to L'Oranger in a night-time raid.

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

The writ said that wires in the pastry oven were tampered with, endangering anyone who tried to use it, refrigerators were turned off, destroying food inside, and knobs and rings were stolen from a stove.

It also claimed that pages were torn from the reservations book and stolen early on 19 July, the day after Mr Wareing was dismissed because of a soaring wage bill and a "truculent and unco-operative attitude" to his bosses.

Mr Ramsay is alleged to have returned to L'Aubergine and encouraged staff to resign. Thirty-nine left, leaving one behind, the company claims. Both restaurants had to close and L'Aubergine only reopened on 10 September but the takings have remained down.

Mr Ramsay, 32, was also ac-



Ramsay: Accused of role in £30,000 of sabotage

cused in the writ of intimidating the pastry chef at L'Oranger and threatened that "they would break him" if he did not resign.

A-Z said that both restau-

rants had suffered a substantial loss of profits and considerable damage to their reputations among their celebrity clientele, which includes Princess Margaret, Robert De Niro and Sean Connery.

Giuliano Lotito, co-director of A-Z, said yesterday: "We are looking at a substantial amount of money, somewhere between £500,000 and £1 million."

He added that he had got on well with Mr Ramsay and believed he was ready to seal a four-year consultancy deal with him, but instead the chef walked out.

"Mr Ramsay led me up the garden path. We set up Mr Ramsay; he was not known to the world four years ago," he said. "He is a very capable and talented chef - that goes without saying - but the stage for him to perform was supplied by us."

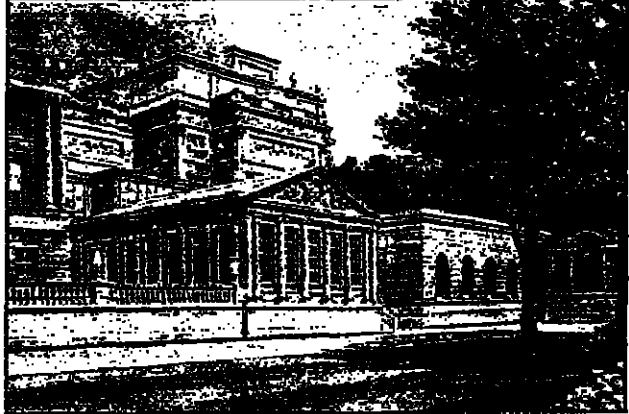
Buckingham Palace unveils £10m art gallery for public

BY DAVID LISTER

PLANS FOR a new £10m public art gallery at Buckingham Palace were unveiled yesterday, promising major improvements for the display of one of the world's largest art collections.

The development, to be completed in time for the Queen's golden jubilee in 2002, is the biggest building project at the palace since 1913 when George V redesigned the facade. John Simpson, the neo-classical architect who advised the Prince of Wales on his model village in Poundbury, Dorset, is in charge of the work.

The expanded gallery will house the Queen's priceless collection of works by Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Canaletto and



An artist's impression of the proposed gallery

Landseer. The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales had all "taken an active and enthusiastic part" in the project, which will be financed by tourist revenues at the palace and Wind-

sor Castle, the director of the royal collection, Hugh Roberts, said. There will be no cost to the taxpayer.

"The idea is not to put on great blockbuster exhibitions," Mr Roberts said. "I doubt

whether there's a single major work of art - or minor one - in the royal collection that has not been seen, either on permanent public view or public exhibition in this country. But the new gallery will allow us to show substantially more works of art at any one time."

The royal collection includes some 9,000 pictures, engravings and miniatures, thousands of drawings, watercolours and prints, as well as books, furniture, sculpture, glass, porcelain, arms and armour, textiles, silver, gold and the Crown Jewels.

The present Queen's Gallery will close at the end of this year and reopen in February 2002. There are further plans for a £5m redesign of the palace kitchens and service areas.

Leading article, Review, page 3

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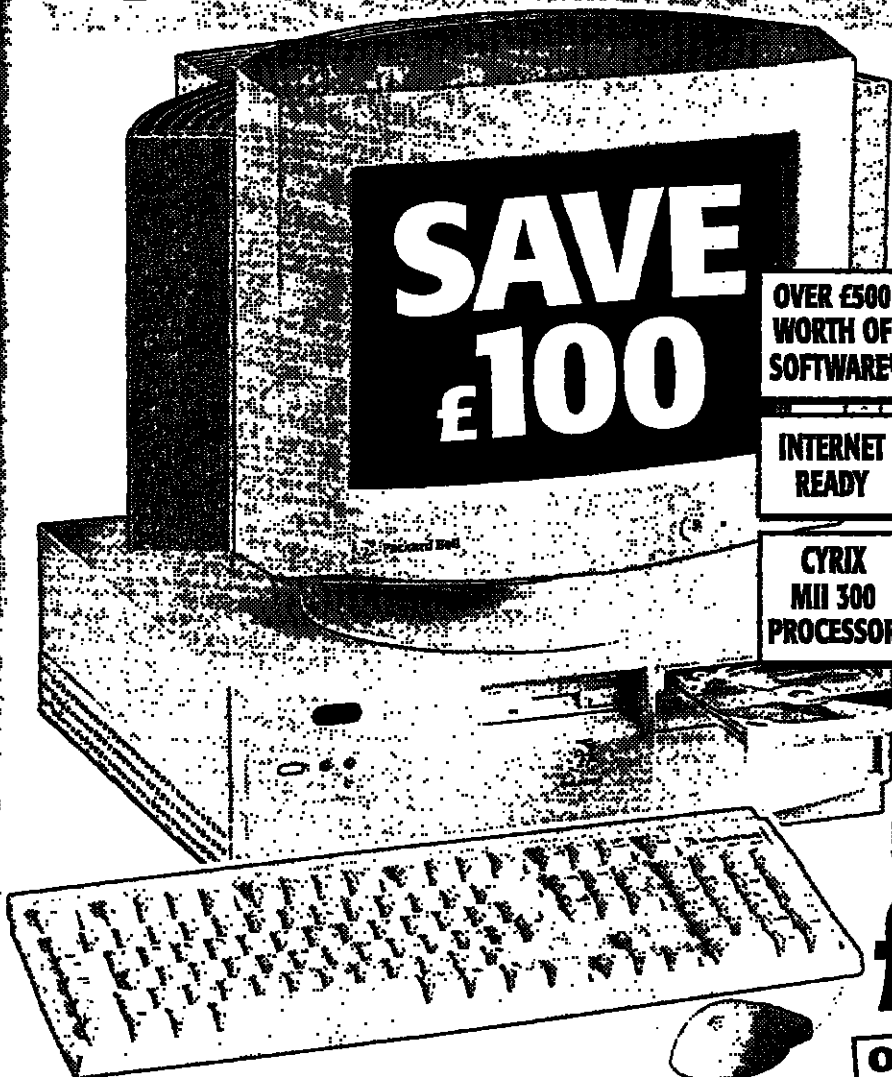
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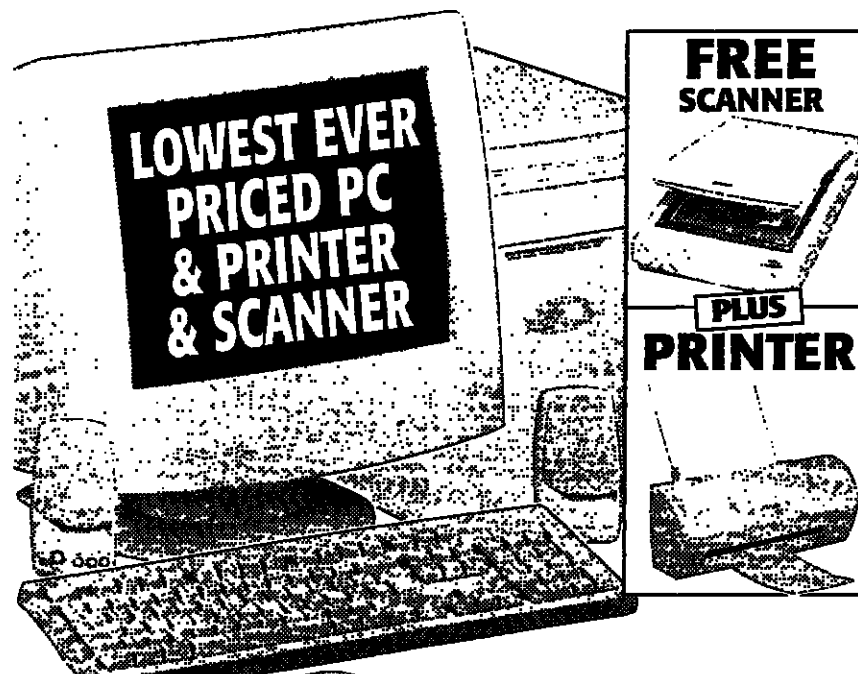
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America still hails 'likeable' Billy Liar

AS THE Clinton trial begins, the mood across the United States is not only calm but almost uninterested. However, much constitutional historians and television commentators try to talk up the perils of the moment, the emotional charge generated by a true national crisis is not there.

This is largely because Bill Clinton's authority as national leader is still remarkably intact. When a group of Washington political analysts gathered this week to address the theme of "Life under a weakened presidency", they concluded that, while the institution of the presidency might be weakened, the presidential authority of Mr Clinton himself was largely intact.

They also agreed that even if, as they tended to believe, the institution of the presidency had been diminished in recent years, the fault could not be laid primarily at Mr Clinton's door. The solidity of his political authority may be a product of the flourishing economy - and vice versa. The Wall Street Journal noted that New York markets fell 20 per cent in the two years between the Watergate break-in and Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974.

In the year since the Clinton scandal broke, markets rose 20 per cent. Whatever happens on Wall Street, the paper said, "few would have predicted this kind of resilience in the face of this much scandal".

Commentators have started to look beyond the economy for why so many have remained loyal to Mr Clinton for so long. The most recent polls put his job-approval rating at 62 to 67 per cent; more than 60 per cent said he should not be tried and a similar proportion said he should not be removed from office. They believe this even though a similar majority (though not necessarily the same respondents) say they believe him guilty of the two charges - perjury and obstruction of justice - the seriousness of which no one contests.

The new explanation for Mr Clinton's ratings, to quote William Safire in *The New York Times*, is "a widespread affection for this likeable lame-duck

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

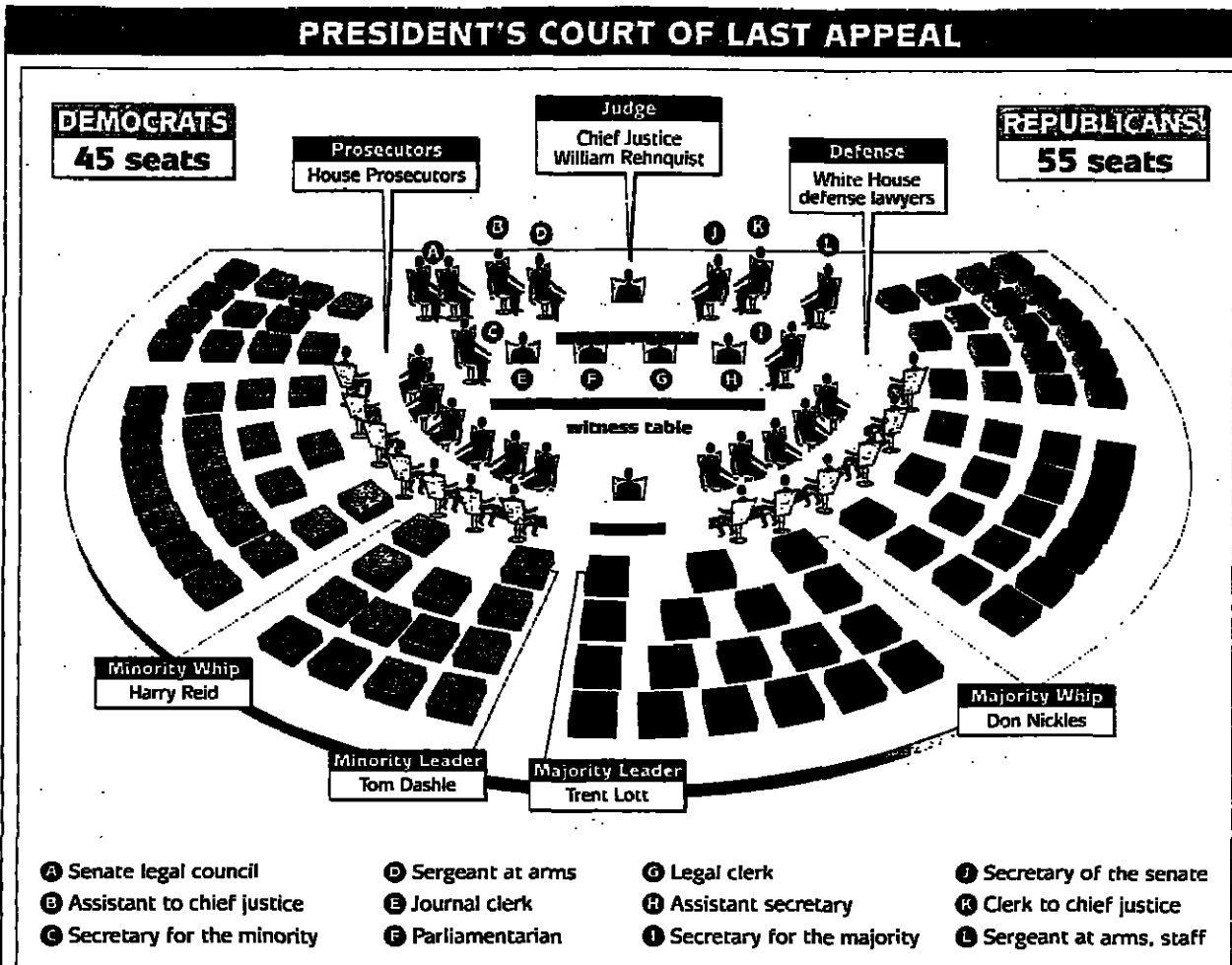
liar... His many weaknesses become his strength". Correspondents to *The New York Times*, in response to Mr Safire's column, concurred, also citing unacceptable invasions of his privacy and unwarranted pursuit by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, as additional reasons for sympathy.

Thomas Mann, director of governmental studies at the liberal Brookings Institution, said: "It is a style of governance, of seeming to connect with the concerns of ordinary people in this country, that is also a source of the presidential strength, together with his very effective counter-punching in dealing with the majority Republicans in Congress." In other words, a lot of Americans like him, despite his faults, and he is a highly adept politician.

Even if Mr Clinton's stature and effectiveness as president have been affected by the Lewinsky scandal and impeachment, the damage to his presidency is marginal. The respect Mr Clinton continues to enjoy as president is perhaps his strongest suit. Impeachment has always been regarded as having a political as well as a judicial aspect, and even some of his harshest Republican opponents believe they must take account of this when they deliberate on their verdict.

Even though Mr Clinton conducted his "inappropriate relationship" with Ms Lewinsky in the White House, sometimes while he was transacting official business on the telephone, and Congressmen on the right of the Republican Party accuse him of "staining" the presidency, most Americans seem to see his behaviour more in personal terms. He hurt the institution less than he hurt himself and his family.

But if the presidency is weaker now and if Mr Clinton's conduct is not primarily to blame, who or what is? Many analysts see the end of the Cold War as one culprit, because it had the effect of leaving US power unchallenged and rendered a strong national leader less vital.



Key players

The 13 House managers who will act as prosecutors are all Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee. They are led by Judiciary Chairman Henry Hyde.

Clinton's defence is being presented by six private lawyers and five government lawyers led by Charles Ruff, who heads the White House counsel's office.

Senators, usually a garrulous group, are required to remain seated and silent during the presentations.

Presiding officer

As the presiding officer of the trial, Chief Justice William Rehnquist is responsible for making rulings on all points of law and the admissibility of evidence. However, any decision he makes can be overruled by a simple majority vote.



Judiciary Chairman Henry Hyde



White House Counsel Charles Ruff



Presiding officer Chief Justice William Rehnquist

A hot ticket

Only 596 tickets will be distributed for each session of the trial. Additionally there are 122 reserved seats in the gallery for the media.



Breakdown:

- 400 for senators to give to their own guests
- 50 for the general public
- 45 for the office of the Sergeant at Arms
- 30 for distribution to White House officials
- 22 for foreign diplomats based in Washington
- 20 for members of the House of Representatives
- 20 for Senate leaders to give to their own guests
- 9 for the Supreme Court

A cold, grey light shines on history

THE QUEUE of people waiting to watch the trial of President Bill Clinton were as divided as America itself on the merits of the case. But as they waited, shivering and cold, outside the Capitol they could, at least, agree on one thing: they were there to witness history. That separated them from the large number who think the whole thing is a waste of time and money, and who spent yesterday pondering the stock market, Michael Jordan or the state of their bank accounts.

Let history record that the first in the queue were Alan Goodwin and Ricky Colson from Alexandria, who had been there since 5.30 in the morning, while a grey dawn broke and freezing rain spattered the Tarmac around them. "We want to see history, to be a part of history," said Ricky, shrouded in a rainproof smock. "Nobody alive has ever had the opportunity to witness something like this."

"Live," added Alan. By 10.30, there were 30 people behind them, each certain to get one of the tickets. After that, the seats would be rotated to the next people in line. The ceremonial part of the proceedings had been dispatched the week before, and now the real business was to begin.

This being Washington, it was an erudite and informed queue. Rivero Emilio-Adolfo, a Professor of Constitutional Law from Maryland University, had brought some visiting friends to watch the drama. "This is a historic opportunity they should not miss," he said, sheltered beneath a vast umbrella. "They will have an opportunity to watch democracy in action. The most powerful man in America must answer for his actions," he said approvingly. "This is not a country of caudillos or leaders. This is a country of laws."

Sunil James had come down from New York for a job interview, but it hadn't worked out, so he had come along to watch. "I voted for him twice, in 1992 and 1996," he said of the President. "I'm hoping he will not be found guilty. It's disappointing to see it's come down to this, to lying and partisan politics. It doesn't seem to me what the founders of the Constitution meant."

But others were disappointed precisely because they believed that this would not end with the topping of a president. Mike, from Fairfax, Virginia, said that he did not "think justice will take place. He should be thrown out of office, but that won't happen. I'm kind of upset. It's a mockery of the country."

And his friend, who preferred not to be identified, agreed. He had watched Question Time the other day, he said, and the House of Commons had disintegrated into laughter as it discussed the proceedings here in Washington. "They're laughing at America. I don't like it," he said.

These divisions echo the broader discussion in the nation: is this the proudest moment of the legal and political order, showing that even the chief executive, voted into office by the people, wielder of the nuclear suitcase, commander in chief, can be brought to book? Or is it a show trial, for form's sake? Has this man so degraded the office of President that he must be thrown out at the first opportunity, or is he the victim of a partisan conspiracy?

As the queue shivered in the chilling wind, the process unwound around them. Boxes of papers were hoisted out of taxis by aides while cameramen herded truckloads of equipment into the building. Whatever it was, it was starting.

Rules echo ordeal of Andrew Johnson

ONLY THE second Senate trial of a president and the first this century is to be regulated by rules set for the first impeachment trial - Andrew Johnson's in 1868 - and updated only minimally. The rules are old-fashioned and rigorous.

From the time a trial is opened, the Chief Justice of the United States presides in the Senate chamber. The present Chief Justice, William Rehnquist, 72, is a specialist in constitutional law and has made a

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

special study of impeachment. He is held in high regard by fellow lawyers but also in awe as a stickler for procedure - and quiet.

There was some confusion about how he should be addressed, with Mr President, Mr Presiding Officer, and Your Honour mooted. It was decided he should be addressed as Mr Chief Justice. One of the

rules altered for the Bill Clinton trial is the timetable. On most days proceedings are to start at 1pm rather than noon, to accommodate Mr Rehnquist's Supreme Court commitments. He has also been allocated an office at the Senate, equipped, for the first time, with a telephone.

The prosecution is represented by the 13 "managers" appointed by the House of Representatives, who will sit on the left of the chamber. All are Re-

publicans, all are lawyers and all are on the Judiciary Committee, which formulated articles of impeachment against Mr Clinton in the House. They are led by Henry Hyde, who chaired the Judiciary Committee proceedings.

On the right of the chamber at the front sits the President's defence counsel - seven lawyers, led by Charles Ruff, Mr Ruff, White House chief counsel, summed up Mr Clinton's case in the House and will do

the same in the Senate. Special tables have been made for each team.

The 100 senators, acting as jurors, have been given written guidelines for their comportment. They will sit on either side of the chamber. Republicans on the right, Democrats on the left. They must remain silent; whispering is ruled out, though no punishment has been set. They may ask questions and raise objections but only in writing and only through

the presiding judge. They must ensure phones neither ring nor beep.

They must rise "silently" when the Chief Justice arrives and leaves. When votes are cast, each senator must rise in turn and state their vote.

The first part of the trial is expected to last 10 days. Votes are then likely to be taken on whether to dismiss or to continue and whether witnesses should be called or more evidence be sought.

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Wounded Santer clings on to power

A WEAKENED European Commission hung on to power yesterday as the European Parliament drew back its threat to sack all 20 Commissioners in an epic confrontation over fraud, mismanagement and rampant nepotism in Brussels.

Their climb-down defused the immediate crisis but MEPs inflicted massive wounds on Jacques Santer, European Commission president, and his team shifting, perhaps permanently, political power and influence from an arrogant and secretive bureaucracy to the EU's only directly elected body.

A motion to sack the entire Commission, Parliament's nuclear option, only ever used on four previous occasions in the EU's history, received the support of 42 per cent of MEPs.

Although a technical victory this was a devastating humiliation for the Commission, reflected in the grim faces of its 20 members as the results of the roll call vote were read out to a packed chamber.

Only 293 MEPs out of 636 voted for the Commission. An especially strong slap in the

BY CATHERINE BUTLER
AND STEPHEN CASTLE
in Strasbourg

near rebellion in his own ranks from such commissioners as Neil Kinnock, he ruled out resigning and even raised the prospect of returning to head the next Commission.

A resolution targeting the former French Socialist Prime Minister Edith Cresson was much more heavily defeated. Mme Cresson survived comfortably, backed by Socialists and defecting conservatives, who were swung by Mr Santer's threat to resign if any individual commissioners were singled out for condemnation.

But scandal-tainted Mme Cresson could yet be pushed out. The Commission is now politically bound to comply with an independent inquiry into the allegations about her and the Spanish commissioner Manuel Marin. MEPs voted overwhelmingly for a resolution stating that any commissioners found guilty of wrongdoing by the end of March will be ousted, if necessary by legal means.

MEPs claim they are now on the way to winning the power to force individual commissioners to resign.

Socialist leader Pauline Green said Parliament had put in place the means for Mr Santer to fire Commissioners Cresson or Marin, if they are found guilty by the tribunal. "There isn't a government in Europe that could stop him now in terms of public opinion. The Socialists will be behind him."

José María Gil-Robles, the Parliament's President, said this could be made a permanent feature when the Commission President gains the right to reshuffle Commission portfolios under the Amsterdam Treaty. "The Parliament must be entitled to ask the President of the Commission for the sacking of individual Commissioners," he said.

The Commission's fiercest critics were livid at the climb-down on attempts to target Ms Cresson. Edward Mc Millan-Scott, leader of the British Tories, accused Socialists and southern European conservatives of orchestrating a "white-wash of Euro fraud". He accused Pauline Green of voting for "the culture of cover-up".

Leading article.
Review, Page 3



Wilfried Martens: 'Age of bureaucracy has ended'

face came from Germany where MEPs from both the left and right defied their political groups to vote en masse against the Commission.

Wilfried Martens, leader of the Christian Democrats, said: "The age of bureaucracy has ended." Pat Cox, leader of the Liberals, and previously a strong Commission supporter, told the House after the vote: "Politically we believe the Commission is dead in the water."

A relieved Mr Santer insisted afterwards he was satisfied with the outcome. He said it was an expression of democracy at work, adding: "The Commission was not weakened."

Despite having suffered a

Green's reputation is dented by vote

AS BOASTS go it was a brazen one. Pauline Green, leader of the socialist group, yesterday claimed her share of the credit for having kicked the European Commission "in the backside".

Yet the MEPs who delivered the blow did it against her advice. And, while Ms Green tabled the initial censure motion against the commission last December, her intention was to vote against it to give the 20 commissioners a vote of confidence.

This has not been a good week for the 50-year-old whose political tactics have backfired badly. Yesterday, she made it public that she had no intention

BY STEPHEN CASTLE

of standing for European Parliament president, which may be just as well.

Ms Green, who throughout the week faced accusations of having connived in the survival plan of Jacques Santer, the commission president, was spotted in the bar of the Hilton Hotel in Strasbourg on Monday enjoying a drink with him. As she said, rather defensively, yesterday: "I was having a drink of water and he came in with his entourage and, of course, he sat down. But there was no suggestion of collusion in how things were handled."



Kamajors, traditional hunters who are siding with Ecomog, board a vehicle in Freetown on their way to fight the Revolutionary United Front. Jean-Philippe Kistake/AFP

Vultures swoop on corpses filling the streets of devastated Freetown

VULTURES PICKED at bodies strewn on the pot-holed streets of central Freetown yesterday as West African troops backing Sierra Leone's government drove rebels from the battered city.

"It's just horrible, there are rotting bodies in the streets, corpses everywhere," said Blanche, a secretary emerging from her house after a week trapped indoors.

Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, retreating eastwards after capturing more than half the capital when they surged through the defences of

BY JEFF KOINANGE
in Freetown

the Nigerian-led Ecomog forces on 6 January, offered the possibility of at least a lull in the fighting.

Sam Bockarie, the rebel commander, said by satellite telephone yesterday the RUF would start an unconditional seven-day ceasefire on Monday.

Speaking from Abidjan in Ivory Coast, he said: "After that one week, if [rebel leader Foday] Sankoh is not released, we are going to resume our offensive."

Negotiations for a formal ceasefire were being led by the United Nations and West African governments. Mediators awaited the reply of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone to the RUF's key demand - Mr Sankoh's release.

Mr Sankoh's whereabouts were a mystery and the pressure on President Kabbah and the Ecomog intervention force to agree a ceasefire with the rebels may have lessened as the military tide turned.

The rebel retreat left Freetown landmarks riddled with bullet-holes. Some were burnt

to the ground. The UN headquarters was all but destroyed by fire and bullets.

With 15,000 men from Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea already serving with Ecomog in Sierra Leone, a senior Ecomog source in Freetown said yesterday more reinforcements were expected. He said a crack Nigerian regiment, the 72nd Airborne, was on its way to help to flush out rebel units.

"Last time we made the mistake of not going all the way, this time we're going to finish the job," the source said, referring to events in February

1997 when Ecomog evicted an army junta and restored President Kabbah to power.

Nigeria's government warned on Wednesday that it must be closely involved in any peace initiative - an apparent rebuke to some of the numerous mediators shuttling between the warring parties.

The destruction in central Freetown and a looming humanitarian crisis were the striking legacies of the rebels' scorched-earth retreat and Ecomog's use of warplanes and artillery.

State House, formerly Sier-

ra Leone's presidency, was riddled with bullets and was serving as a shelter for people flocking to the centre in search of food.

The West African force said it had regained control of all parts of the city and it was clear the Nigerian-led force had full command of the centre yesterday. Food stores were beginning to open and residents were buying rice, corned beef and anything edible.

"Life will be back to normal by the weekend," said Colonel SO Ogheni, of Ecomog's Nigerian contingent. (Reuters)

Insults fly as French parties go to war

EVEN BY the fractious standards of French politics, this has been a breathtaking week.

The centre party has spent four days insulting - and receiving insults from - its nominal allies on the right. And Lionel Jospin, the Socialist Prime Minister, has run away with the nationalist and law-and-order clothes of the Gaullists.

The warring wings of the far-right National Front have been to the courts to grapple over who has the right to use the party's name. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, one of the leaders of the 1968 student revolt, resurrected as a green liberal, continues to cause havoc in Mr Jospin's pink-red-green coalition.

Mr Jospin and the Gaullist President, Jacques Chirac, once the best of co-habiting enemies, are growing at each other. New right-wing parties seem to be springing up like mushrooms.

Can all this really be explained by the fact that there is a European election in June? The elections appear to have thrown the French political establishment - as well as the anti-establishment - into tur-

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

moil. In truth, any other excuse would probably have done just as well.

The underlying causes of the tensions in French politics are two-fold. The inherent instability of the Jospin-Chirac, left-right cohabitation, is beginning to show after 18 relatively untroubled months. And the explosion of the National Front (NF), far from strengthening the centre-right, has shaken its ramshackle structures to the point of destruction.

Last weekend, the Rhône-Alpes regional council had to elect a new president to replace Charles Millon, one of the centre-right regional barons installed last March with NF votes against the instructions of national parties. Mr Millon, who has since started his own right-wing party, La Droite (the Right), was tipped out of office in Lyon on a technicality. The meeting to choose his successor caused another fire-storm in the centre-right.

The Gaullist RPR and the



Jacques Chirac: Growing at the enemy

right-wing Démocratie Libérale (DL) wanted to install a Millon supporter, also backed by Jean-Marie Le Pen's "official" wing of the NF. The centrist UDF refused. It accepted Socialist votes to install one of its own members, Anne-Marie Comptant.

Both sides accused the other of betrayal. The UDF leader, François Bayrou, said his nominal Gaullist and DL allies had breached the solemn pledge



Lionel Jospin: Wearing Gaullist clothes

never to make pacts with the NF. The others accused Mr Bayrou of breaking the promise not to make deals with the left.

The unseemly row is important for two reasons. It reduces the possibility that Jacques Chirac might call a snap presidential election next year, two years early. Secondly, it raises the intriguing possibility that the UDF, now stripped of its more conservative elements, might drift into alliances with the left

at local level, even possibly at national level.

This would fundamentally realign French politics. Mr Bayrou has denied any such intention. But he has let it be known that he will run his own list in the European elections in June - destructively splitting the centre-right vote - unless the Gaullists and DL agree to run on a pro-European ticket.

Such a prospect is unthinkable for the Gaullist leader, Philippe Séguin, a partially re-elected Eurosceptic who faces the erosion of the party's grass roots by a profusion of small nationalist parties. Mr Séguin seemed in the past couple of days to be trying to widen the breach with the UDF, not to heal it. He ordered Mr Bayrou to "choose sides" and accused him of trying to "remake the old dream" of a centre-left alliance.

To confuse the issues further, Mr Jospin chose this week to make a series of tough, Blairish statements on law and order and the need to ensure the survival of an "irreducible reality" of nationhood in Europe. With both themes, he

was encroaching on Gaullist ground.

In a television interview on Wednesday night, Mr Jospin appeared more rattled than confident. The eruption of Mr Cohn-Bendit, as the standard-bearer of the greens, has shaken the Socialist-Communist-Green coalition. On Wednesday the Communists rejected the possibility of a joint list with the Socialists in the European poll.

In the NF, Bruno Mégret, the party's de facto Number Two who has been in open revolt against Mr Le Pen since December, will hold a conference near Marseilles a week tomorrow. The meeting will "depose" Mr Le Pen and elect Mr Mégret as the leader of the self-proclaimed "democratic" NF.

Mr Le Pen went to court this week to deny the Mégretists the right to use the party name. A decision will be announced today. Mr Le Pen had forgotten to renew the title National Front as an official trademark. One of Mr Mégret's lieutenants quietly registered the words in his own name in December.

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The mermaid after
most recent decapitation

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The event sparked ang
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US clash with Russia over rocket boycott

ALREADY BATTERED relations between the United States and Russia went from bad to worse yesterday as Washington threatened to stop launching American commercial satellites on Russian rockets - business worth millions of dollars to Moscow's impoverished space industry.

The move came as the Russian media was reverberating with thunderous denials of US allegations that three top Moscow scientific institutes have been helping Iran to develop nuclear weaponry and ballistic missiles. "We did not sell Iran a nuclear bomb!" said the front page headline of Segodnya newspaper.

The US national security adviser, Sandy Berger, announced sanctions on Tuesday against the Mendeleyev Chemical Technical University, the Scientific Research and Design Institute of Power and Technology and the Moscow Aviation Institute. The ban stops US companies buying from and selling to them.

At the heart of the issue is a nuclear plant that the Russians are building for Iran near the Gulf port of Bushehr. The Russians insist that the contract, signed in 1995, is a civil energy project but the Americans have long suspected that Iran is secretly using it to develop nuclear weapons.

BY PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

The US, under pressure from Israel, is also alarmed by Iran's development of the Shahab-3 missile which, with a range of 800 miles, can reach Tel Aviv.

The Bushehr project is worth about \$800m (£500m) to Moscow - money that, with the economy in ruins, Moscow needs. And to the exasperation of the Americans, Russia is now also negotiating with the Iranians to build a second unit at Bushehr.

This has arisen a month after Moscow briefly recalled its ambassadors to London and Washington in a protest about the Anglo-American bombing of Baghdad.

However, Russia's dependence on the West for economic assistance means it can do little more than spout indignant rhetoric.

This may be one reason why Boris Yeltsin, who yesterday spent yet another day at his country retreat, has so far stayed out of the fray. It has been left to the powerful Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, to condemn the US's "strong-arm methods" as "counter-productive".

Most Russians will see the sanctions as another example of American bullying and high-handed interference in Moscow's dealings with its neighbours - a view that will further fuel a potentially dangerous anti-Western trend.

Nor has the fact gone unnoticed that the issue coincides with the Clinton impeachment proceedings. "Whenever a US president feels the need to boost his rating you see this sort of action," said one commentator.

The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, is due in Moscow later this month: she should not expect to be made welcome.



Ethnic Albanian children sit behind a plastic-covered window yesterday in a village 25 miles south-east of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. Some families are returning to homes damaged during clashes between Serbian and ethnic Albanian forces last year. Reuters

Invitation to a beheading

EUROPEAN TIMES
COPENHAGEN

JØRGEN NASH never expected to set a trend. In 1964, angry at the women in his life, he decapitated Denmark's most famous female - the little mermaid who sits peacefully waiting for her prince on Copenhagen's seafloor.

History does not record what his lovers thought of the attack. But tourists admiring the Danish national symbol can now not be sure whether the mermaid is looking over her shoulder for a prince or an assailant.

Jørgen Nash's attack has been followed by many more acts of vandalism against Edward Eriksson's 1913 bronze statue. But all Mr Nash wanted to do was to let off steam,

claimed the mermaid was an insult to the female sex and therefore deserved the harshest treatment.

"Last year I was promoting my book at an exhibition and a policeman came up to me," Mr Nash said this week. "He told me that on that day eight people had tried to enter the exhibition, claiming they beheaded the mermaid and wanting to punish me for taking the credit. Unbelievable."

Never one to let pass an opportunity for attention, Mr Nash is in the process of arranging a party for wannabe decapitators. "I plan to gather them all, find 200 divers to search for the head in the marsh and have a grand celebration." The bizarre party would be timed to coincide with the publication of his second volume of memoirs.

There have been several copycat attacks on the statue. In 1976, it was covered in red paint and eight years later she lost her right arm to two drunk men, who humbly returned it to the police the following day.

And in 1990, someone tried to cut off her head again, but had either too weak a saw or too weak a will: the villain only made it half-way through the neck and the mermaid was able to gaze at the sea in peace for another eight years before a more successful killing took place. That was discovered in the early hours of 8 January last year by a television cameraman, Michael Forsmark Poulsen. "I was called up at 3.30am by a youngster who said that the mermaid was 'missing something'," Mr Poulsen said. "So I went out to the waterfront just in time to film two people wearing balaclavas roller-skating away from the mermaid, who was headless once again."

A television station offered a reward for the recovery of the maiden's head but it was returned anonymously. Mr Poulsen was later questioned by the police, suspected of being involved in the crime. "I do have a record of theft and vandalism," he admits, "but I swear I did not murder the mermaid."

But in Denmark, nothing is a bad as a mermaid murder and Mr Nash is the only decapitator who has faced national vilification - even if it was 30 years after the event. Able to escape prosecution because the case was old, Mr Nash holds the doubtful honour of being the founder of a culture of national symbol vandalism.

Neither Big Ben nor the Statue of Liberty has endured what the peaceful little mermaid has suffered while awaiting her prince. CHARLOTTE BEDER



The mermaid after her most recent decapitation

he said in his 1997 confession. "At the start of the Sixties I had two wives at the same time," said the eccentric, 78-year-old artist. "One of them was a 20-year-old student of mine. When I returned from a tour of Norway in April 1964, this young love of my life had been thrown out by my older wife, who was terribly jealous."

In his anger, he bought a hacksaw and cut the bronze lady's neck. "I was in luck that night," he recalls. "It was awfully cold, so the seafloor wasn't crowded with the usual lovers and drunks. And the hammering from the docks created a cover for my sawing noise."

It took five broken blades before the head finally came off. It has never been recovered from the shallow grave near Copenhagen where Mr Nash dumped it.

The event sparked anger and sorrow among the Danes, who regard the little mermaid as their Statue of Liberty.

Ten thousand newspaper articles and 100 television and radio programmes covered the story. It was also front-page news as far away as Moscow and Tokyo.

So much attention was given to the mermaid murder that since 1964 more than 200 people have admitted to the crime, demanding conviction and fame. Among them was a radical feminist group that

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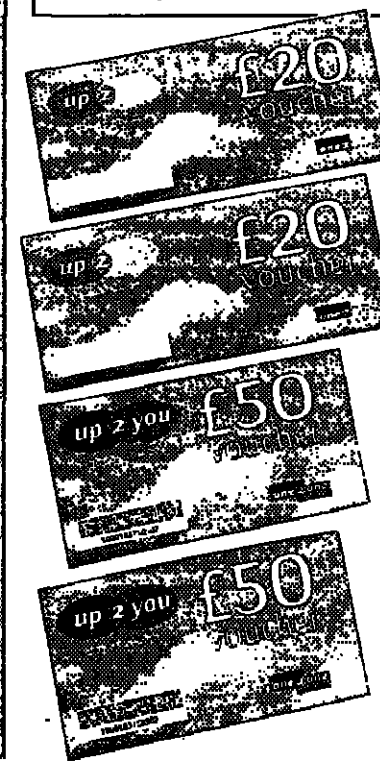
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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Rover adds jobs, AA cuts back

ROVER GROUP is to create more than 500 jobs, but the Automobile Association and Golden Wonder Crisps are shedding a total of 800, it was announced yesterday. Rover has signed a 10-year parts warehousing deal with Caterpillar that will create 300 jobs at Rover and 255 at Caterpillar. Meanwhile, the AA said it was reorganising its breakdown activities into three new supercentres, involving a net jobs loss of 250. Golden Wonder is shedding 540 jobs at its Widnes crisp factory.

Bank of Scotland restructures



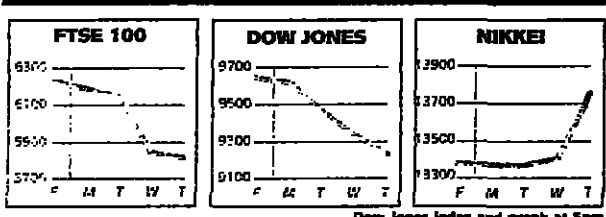
BANK OF SCOTLAND is to reshape its business over the next year to ensure that customers have access to all group services and products, the group said yesterday. The present functions of the clearing bank and UK group companies - Capital Bank, the British Linen Bank and Bank of Wales - will be realigned into three operating divisions, a new services division and an extended group office function. The first phase of change will include the formation of four business and operating divisions reporting to an executive board, chaired by group chief executive Peter Burt (pictured). Shares in BoS ended up 2.5p at 741.5p.

Kodak exposed as revenue falls

EASTMAN KODAK, the world's largest photography company, said fourth-quarter profits rose a lower-than-forecast 39 per cent and warned that 1999 earnings may also fall short of analysts' expectations. Kodak's stock dropped 11 per cent after the chairman, George Fisher, said 1999 profits would, at best, meet current estimates.

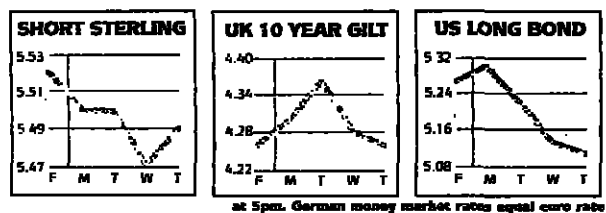
Kodak managed its third straight rise in quarterly profit because it is cutting a fifth of its workforce. Profits gained from property and investment gains that Kodak said would continue in 1999. Yet revenue fell for the eighth consecutive quarter as Kodak slashed US film prices by 15 per cent.

STOCK MARKETS



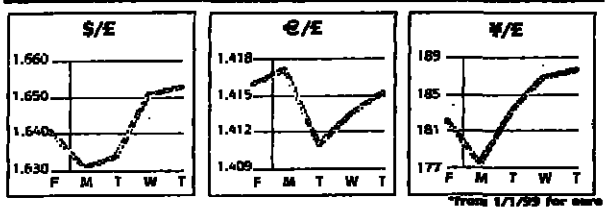
Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	YTD (%)
FTSE 100	5820.20	-29.90	-0.51	6195.60	4599.20	2.78
FTSE 250	4872.80	-1.60	-0.03	5970.90	4247.60	3.41
FTSE 350	2749.00	-12.10	-0.44	2969.10	2210.40	2.88
FTSE All Share	2654.52	-11.19	-0.42	2886.52	2143.53	2.52
FTSE SmallCap	2107.70	-0.90	-0.04	2793.90	1834.40	3.82
FTSE Biotech	1157.30	2.20	0.19	1517.10	1046.20	4.25
FTSE AIM	810.30	3.80	0.47	1146.90	761.30	1.24
FTSE Eurotop 100	2702.24	-4.57	-0.17	3079.27	2018.15	1.14
FTSE Eurotop 300	1170.81	1.16	0.10	1332.07	860.63	1.06
Dow Jones	9237.05	-114.06	-1.22	9547.96	7400.30	1.65
Nikkei	13738.86	335.26	2.50	17352.95	12787.90	1.06
Hang Seng	10183.13	-90.64	-0.88	11926.16	6544.79	3.45
Dax	4912.75	-19.05	-0.39	5217.83	3833.71	1.73
S&P 500	1236.93	-7.51	-0.61	1278.05	923.32	1.29
Nasdaq	2113.66	-3.83	-0.17	2386.30	1357.09	0.30
Toronto 300	6642.90	8.75	0.13	7837.70	5320.90	1.64
Brazil Bovespa	5443.44	-171.43	-3.05	12339.14	4575.69	10.91
Belgium Bel20	3461.41	46.26	1.36	3713.21	2437.69	1.89
Amsterdam AEX	514.11	6.82	1.34	600.65	366.58	1.91
France CAC 40	3997.06	38.34	0.97	4404.94	2881.21	2.02
Milan MIB30	34180.00	-28.00	-0.08	39170.00	24175.00	1.19
Madrid IBS 35	9394.20	-17.20	-0.19	10289.80	6869.80	1.92
Irish Allshare	5108.50	43.95	0.86	5581.70	3732.57	1.40
S Korea KOSPI	604.42	-28.61	-4.72	651.95	277.37	1.00
Australia ASX	2804.80	-17.20	-0.61	2902.90	2386.70	3.17

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	30 year	YTD (%)
UK	5.89	-1.67	5.46	-0.10	4.26	-1.77
US	5.01	-0.62	5.06	-0.61	4.68	5.11
Japan	0.54	-0.19	0.55	-0.13	1.74	-0.13
Germany	3.17	-0.39	3.08	-0.74	3.66	-1.37

CURRENCIES



Index	at Spot	Change	YTD (%)
Dollar	1.6529	+0.36c	1.6286
Euro	1.4151	+0.49c	1.4079
Yen	187.25	+0.03	213.22
£ Index	99.30	+0.30	104.80

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	at Spot	Change	YTD (%)
Brent Oil (\$)	10.69	-0.26	14.99
Gold (\$)	286.25	-0.60	281.49
Silver (\$)	5.14	-0.05	5.70

TOURIST RATES

Index	at Spot	Change	YTD (%)
Australia (\$)	2.5158		
Austria (schillings)	18.88		
Belgium (francs)	55.50		
Canada (\$)	2.4455		
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7964		
Denmark (krone)	10.28		
Finland (markka)	8.1922		
France (francs)	9.0085		
Germany (marks)	2.6987		
Greece (drachma)	446.26		
Hong Kong (\$)	12.37		
Ireland (pounds)	1.0799		
India (rupees)	62.88		
Israel (shekels)	6.2055		
Italy (lira)	2671		
Japan (yen)	183.34		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9987		
Malta (lira)	0.6037		

Shock profit warning wipes £1.5bn off M&S



City analysts reacted with horror to a near-halving of M&S profits after disappointing trading in the key Christmas period. *Glyn Griffiths*

SHARES IN Marks & Spencer plunged to their lowest level for almost six years yesterday after Britain's premier retailer issued a disastrous profit warning along with its Christmas trading statement. The shares fell by 13 per cent, wiping £1.5bn off the company's market value. They eventually closed 53.75p lower at 339.75p.

Although Peter Salsbury, the new chief executive, tried to stress the positive with a restructuring of the group, City analysts reacted with horror to the warning's severity. The company said it now expected full-year profits to be £525m to £575m, the lowest level since 1992. It compares to £1.1bn last year and analysts' estimates of £850m.

Nick Bubb, retail analyst at SG Securities, said the shares could fall further. "I still think they are overvalued. It is amazing when you consider that a year ago people were forecasting £1.2bn for this year, and now we are going to get £550m. And this from a supposedly safe, solid, blue-chip company."

M&S blamed the warning on disappointing Christmas trading, with sales in the critical November and December months "significantly lower" than expected. The slump was particularly evident in clothing and home furnishings.

Mr Salsbury blamed the underperformance on a mistake in buying volumes for the autumn ranges. Basing orders on trading in the spring when demand was buoyant, M&S ordered too much stock, leading to huge quantities of unsold merchandise that had to be heavily discounted in the sales. He said the company had not anticipated the general deterioration of the market nor the disruption of its expansion programme.

In the five weeks to 2 January, UK sales fell by 4.2 per cent on the same period last year. All major departments were down, with home furnishings sales worst hit with a 13 per cent fall. Clothing, footwear and gift sales were down by 5 per cent, and food sales 1.6 per cent lower.

Mr Salsbury said: "These are poor figures, and highlight the

scale of the task facing us. But we have made a start in addressing them. Frankly, I am looking forward to the challenge."

Mr Salsbury's strategy includes re-examining the cost base, which could see the first job losses at the group since 1992. However, the company said it would achieve staff reductions through natural wastage. A single marketing department is being created at M&S for the first time, and there will be more staff on the shop floor to improve customer demands for better service.

The senior management is to be restructured into three business units. Lord Stone will be head of UK retail, with Guy McCracken head of the over-

seas operations. Financial services will be grouped under Robert Colvill, finance director. The changes were welcomed in the City, although analysts said it would take some time for the benefits to come through. "It's the right thing to do. But I don't think anyone is underestimating the scale of the challenge," said Nick Hawkins of Merrill Lynch.

The warning is the latest in a series of setbacks for the retail bellwether. In October it announced a sharp fall in profits, complaining of a "bloodbath" in the clothing market. This was followed by a bitter boardroom battle over who would take over as chief executive from Sir Richard Greenbury, now non-executive chairman.

House of Fraser, the department stores group, saw its shares rise 4p to 57.5p after it reported underlying Christmas sales growth of 0.2 per cent. Tight stock control helped the group improve profit margins.

Meanwhile, shares in Booker, the struggling cash-and-carry group, edged 2.5p higher to 54 pence.

Booker announced a 3 per cent rise in underlying Christmas sales, the sale of its catering unit Foodservice and the appointment of a new finance director.

Retail shares dive on Christmas trading reports

SHARES IN the retail sector took a pounding yesterday after a series of gloomy Christmas trading statements underscored the tough conditions on the high street.

Boots Company was among the major fallers, with shares tumbling 60.5p to 938p after the company said sales in high street stores had been cannibalised by new out-of-town outlets. Like-for-like sales at Boots were just 1.5 per cent higher in the three months to December. Sales of gifts were particularly disappointing.

BHS's share of women's and menswear grew, but at Mothercare the picture was bleaker, with clothing sales hit by competition in the childrenswear

market. Game, the fast expanding computer games retailer, saw its shares slump 63p to 102.5p yesterday after it reported a surprise 3.9 per cent drop in sales in the Christmas and New Year period. It also warned that delays in its store opening programme would hit profits for the full year.

Shares in Rosebys, the furniture retailer, closed marginally lower after it said like-for-like sales dropped 4.1 per cent over the Christmas period. There was better news for GUS, owner of Argos, which saw

shares rise from 581p to 607p following a stronger-than-expected Christmas trading statement.

According to GUS, trade picked up in December, with customers rushing to buy last-minute Christmas presents.

Analysts said consumer confidence may have been buoyed by a series of UK interest rate cuts, a view echoed in the latest survey by Business Strategies, the consultancy. The survey found that most households believed they would be better off in 1999.

Mr Green, who has been stalking Sears for two months, approached the Barclays before Christmas about helping to finance the bid. He will take a 20 per cent stake in the bid vehicle and is thought to be putting in about £20m of his own fortune.

Mr Green said he would become chief executive of Sears after the bid, while Aiden Barclay, the son of David, will be chairman.

He would not be drawn on his plans for Sears, but it is expected that Freemans will be sold off. The potential buyers

include N Brown, the rival UK catalogue retailer, and the German mail order group Otto Versand.

It is thought that the Barclays may also support the £141m sale of Sears's store card business, Creation, to two French banks, which the existing management under chairman Sir Bob Reid announced earlier this week.

It also emerged yesterday that Mr Green's wife, Cristina, owns 1.8 million Sears shares. The 1.2 per cent stake was bought in September.

Outlook, page 15

Barclay twins back £519m Sears bid

THE BARCLAY brothers, the secretive and super-rich twins, yesterday joined forces with the retail entrepreneur Philip Green in a hostile £519m cash bid for Sears which, if successful, is almost certain to result in the break-up of the ailing retail group.

Sears, which owns the high-street chains Miss Selfridge, Wallis, Richards and Adams and the mail order catalogue business Freemans, said the offer "significantly undervalues" the company and urged shareholders to reject it. The 340p a share bid has

already been irrevocably accepted by Phillips & Drew Fund Management, Sears's biggest shareholder with a 22 per cent stake, unless a rival offer worth more than 360p is tabled. Other large shareholders also look likely to back the offer.

One said: "I would think the company will cease to exist in its present form." Another said Sears's chances of finding a white knight or raising enough cash from disposals to fight off the bid were less than 50 per cent.

The offer is being made through a shelf company, January Investments Limited, which is controlled by David and Frederick Barclay. Their other interests include the Ritz hotel and a stable of newspapers ranging from The Scotsman to Sunday Business.

THE BENCHMARK Nikkei index bucked the global trend, ending 2.5 per cent higher as renewed weakness in the yen outweighed concerns about the Brazilian economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 175.85 - almost 2 per cent - at 9,173.71, with sentiment also hit by the impeachment trial of President Clinton and disappointing results from Kodak.

The Nasdaq composite index was trading down 23.25 points at 2,293.56 after technical stocks reversed their earlier rally.

Derek Pain, page 19

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

EARLY GAINS were wiped out as New York remained weak and Footsie ended 29.9 points down at 5,820.2.

Marks & Spencer was the worst performing blue chip, slumping 53.75p to 339.75p following its trading gloom. The shares are at their lowest since 1993. The Marks misery pulled back shares of most of its suppliers, including Northern Foods, off 8p at 113.5p. But Dixons, the electrical retailer, jumped 100.5p to 1,058.5p, a peak.

Source: Thomas Cook

NEW YORK

US STOCKS were trading sharply lower yesterday afternoon, amid persistent worries about the health of the Brazilian economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 175.85 - almost 2 per cent - at 9,173.71, with sentiment also hit by the impeachment trial of President Clinton and disappointing results from Kodak.

The Nasdaq composite index was trading down 23.25 points at 2,293.56 after technical stocks reversed their earlier rally.

TOKYO

THE BENCHMARK Nikkei index bucked the global trend, ending 2.5 per cent higher as renewed weakness in the yen outweighed concerns about the Brazilian economy.

The Nikkei closed up 335.26 points at 13,738.26 as analysts predicted that the fall in the yen would help relieve the pressure on Japanese exporters.

The yen was trading at 113.5 to the dollar in Tokyo trade, well off its highs of 108 to the dollar earlier in the week.

FRANKFURT

GERMANY'S BENCHMARK Xetra DAX index fell by more than 1 per cent, unnerved by early falls on Wall Street in the face of the Brazilian financial crisis.

The electronically traded Xetra DAX ended down 1.59 per cent or 79.37 points to 4,902.75. The Floor DAX fell 0.39 per cent or 19.05 points to 4,912.75.

A 2.8 per cent increase in German gross domestic product, up from 2.2 per cent in 1997, did little to impress the market.

BAe nears £15bn arms merger

By MICHAEL HARRISON

BRITISH AEROSPACE was last night thought to be close to agreeing a £15bn merger with Marconi, the defence electronics arm of GEC, in a deal that would kick-start the restructuring of Europe's arms industry.

The two companies were briefing Government officials and a deal could be announced as early as next week. A merger would create one of the biggest integrated aerospace and defence groups in Europe with sales of \$23bn.

Meanwhile, DaimlerChrysler Aerospace of Germany, which was close to a merger with BAe before Christmas, was in talks with the French defence contractors, Thomson CSF and Lagardere about joining forces.

A source close to the German company said: "Meetings have been taking place at the highest level, both between the companies and the German and French governments."

A merger with Thomson would create a vertically integrated group spanning defence electronics and platforms, similar to a combined BAe-Marconi grouping.

GEC, led by Lord Simpson, says it has been in negotiations with French and US defence contractors as well as BAe about a merger. However, some analysts believe these talks were always a negotiating ploy to obtain as high a price as possible for Marconi in an eventual merger with BAe.

BAe is valued at £5bn while Marconi is worth about £8bn but it is said that Lord Simpson was pressing for the combined entity to be split 50:50 between the two companies.

"It looks like the end-game is near," said one insider, referring to the jockeying for position and incessant speculation there has been for the last two months about who would link up who.

But some advisers remain sceptical, believing that the entire restructuring process could fall flat because of arguments about valuation and control, leaving giant US contractors such as Lockheed Martin and Raytheon to divide and rule.

German industry sources said that if there was a deal between BAe and Marconi it was unlikely there would be a follow-up Anglo-German merger.

However, analysts said the opportunity to acquire Marconi after years of being rebuffed was likely to prove irresistible to BAe, even if it risked alienating Dasa. "The hope will be that its German partner in Eurofighter and the Airbus consortium will come round to a multilateral deal," said one analyst.

Barclays: Shelf company is Sears bid vehicle

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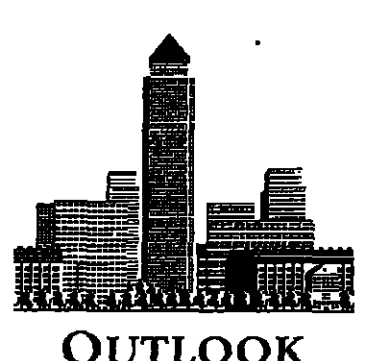
Is it too late to stop the rot at M&S?

THAT THERE was something seriously wrong at Marks & Spencer has perhaps been obvious for some time. Certainly the very public boardroom battle over Sir Richard Greenbury's job seemed strongly symptomatic of it. Now we know for sure. The scale of the profits and sales collapse announced yesterday would have humbled even the most ardent of M&S's critics, but for it to have come from the doyen of British retailing is pretty close to nuclear.

Without doubt, this is one of the worst ever setbacks in M&S's long and distinguished history. M&S is paying a heavy price for its over-optimism. More worrying still, its trading performance over the Christmas period seems to have been significantly worse than most of its competitors, with volume down right across the board.

The consequent loss of market share may at this stage be quite marginal, but there is a danger that things could snowball rapidly from here on in.

The brand and image of M&S has seemed to many tired and past their sell-by date for some time. Its clothing ranges too have seemed out of



OUTLOOK

touch with modern consumer tastes and trends. There are elements in this statement, of the "kitchen sink" exercise that all new chief executives are careful to perform when they take up the reigns of power. Obviously, it suits Peter Salsbury to get all the bad news out in the open early in his tenure, so that he can establish a new low point from which to build. Unfortunately there seems to be more to it in this case. Even Mr Salsbury cannot be certain that this is the bottom and he is keen to stress that the company faces a profoundly difficult year.

Much store is being laid in the new management structure an-

nounced yesterday. For the first time an overall head of UK retailing is being appointed, though how this job differs from that of Mr Salsbury is not entirely clear. Less clear still is whether this redefinition of lines of responsibility amounts to any more than a restuffing of the existing management pack.

For the first time also the group plans to recruit external talent into a beefed up marketing department. Time was when M&S could rely on the strength of its brand to pull the customers; now, apparently, it needs to advertise and indulge in gimmickry.

M&S is also finally giving in to the call of the cost cutters. Mr Salsbury refuses to be drawn on whether the new strategy means job losses, but there can scarcely be any doubt about the meaning of the new teams brief to "go through the organisation layer by layer seeking out opportunities for savings". This too will be a first for M&S, which has traditionally seen headcount reduction as a mark of business failure.

So with the shares at a five-year low and profits having taken a bath, does this past *annus horribilis*

for M&S really mark the bottom? To believe that it does is to think that the power of the brand is still fundamentally so strong that all that is needed is a sharp tug on the tiller to set the vessel back on course. The suspicion must be that the task is a good deal more difficult than that.

Sears/Green

IT ALWAYS costs £1 to buy a Sears share, as the old saw used to run in the City. Well, now you can pick them up for the equivalent of 34p, allowing for last year's share consolidation, and that is just what the Barclay brothers and Philip Green plan to do.

So disillusioned is Sears' biggest shareholder, Philips & Drew, with the present management that it has irrevocably agreed to sell out for cash at 340p, even if another bidder comes along offering an extra 19p. Not so much a case of a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush, as of anything being better than the dead parrot Sir Bob Reid is presiding over.

The offer price may be 120p south of Sears' net asset value, but

Mr Green and the Barclays can hardly be accused of being opportunists in their timing. Mr Green has been telegraphing his bid intentions for the last six weeks and, even so, the offer price is still a 10 per cent premium to Sears closing price on Wednesday night.

In these circumstances, any bid defence looks like being a non starter. Indeed, one of Sir Bob's ramparts has already been knocked flat since P&D agreed to pledge its 22 per cent stake to the Barclays after hearing of Sears' plan to hand back 141p to shareholders through the sale of its store card business to the French.

What price Sir Bob being able to assemble a sum of the parts argument that persuades remaining shareholders to stick with the board? The chances of a white knight look less than even as do Sears' prospects of selling the mail order business Freemans for enough to make the numbers stack up.

Sears could argue that the offer price takes no account of the book value of the property in its various high street retailing chains. It might also argue that Mr Green's own retail empire, Amber Day, was not-

ing to write home about, though since Mr Green's offer is in cash, this hardly matters. But the killer counter-argument is that Sears has simply failed to deliver once too often.

Pac-Man troubles

MORE CONFUSION in the two way takeover bid between Marston Thompson & Evershed and Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. Just to recap, Wolves last November launched a £262m bid for its rival Midlands brewer, Marstons.

Marstons responded by launching its own bid for Wolves, the first time the so called Pac-Man defence has been used in Britain. In the process it made a nonsense of Takeover Panel rules governing the timetable of a bid situation and the release of information.

The Takeover Panel yesterday issued the following clarification. "Following discussions with W&DB and Marston, the executive has ruled that day 39 of the bid timetable for W&DB's offer ("New Day 39") will be deemed to be the earlier of Wednesday 20 January and the date on which Marston

posts its offer document. Accordingly, the last date for W&DB to post any revised offer document will be seven days after New Day 39".

All clear now? Good, because if not the Panel is mighty reluctant to explain the reasoning behind this masterful piece of arbitration. Commercially confidential, old boy, is the line. Since when was it any part of a regulator's job to clothe its decisions in secrecy? It hardly does the Panel's position as one of the last bastions of self regulation much credit.

As it happens Marstons seems set to do the logical thing and synchronise the close of its bid with the close of the Wolves bid anyway, offering shareholders a clear choice between the two strategies.

Unfortunately, this increases quite markedly the likelihood of an outcome that would completely floor most company lawyers, let alone the Takeover Panel - that both offers are successful.

The high degree of commonality between the shareholders of the two companies make this seem not a strong likelihood, but even so it is only too possible. Just try pronouncing on that one, dear Panel.



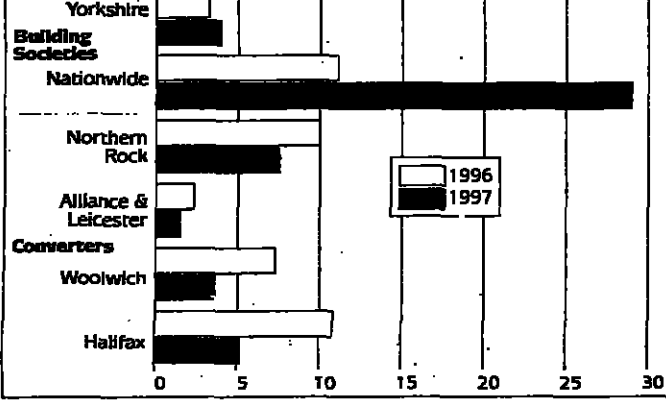
Halifax, which saw its share of new mortgages sink to a third of its normal level last year, is offering a two-year fixed rate mortgage at 4.45 per cent

A SELECTION OF THE BEST MORTGAGE DEALS

Mortgage type	Rate (%)	Provider
Variable rate	6.55	Standard Life Bank
Fixed rate (2years)	4.99	West Bromwich
Fixed rate (2years)	2.99*	West Bromwich
Fixed rate (5years)	5.93	Norwich & Peterborough
Capped rate (4years)	5.99	Scarborough
Discount (1year)	1.35*	Scarborough
Discount (3years)	5.15	Nationwide
Cashback (8%)	7.45	Northern Rock

*Indicates borrower is tied in to the mortgage, at a rate of the lender's choosing, after the fix or discount is over. Source: Moneyfacts

NEW LENDING MARKET SHARE



Mortgage lenders prepare for battle

BY ANDREW VERITY

News Analysis: Customers may be smiling but Halifax's launch of its lowest ever fixed-rate home loan signals tough times for the banks

THE PRICE war in the mortgage market reached a new level of intensity this week when Halifax launched its lowest-ever fixed-rate mortgages. In a move interpreted by some as a sign of desperation, the country's biggest lender is offering to fix customer's payments for two years at a rate as low as 4.45 per cent.

The aggressive offer - which, of course, has catches - reflects an increasingly hard-fought price war in the mortgage market, which is beginning to change the way mortgage lenders operate.

Standard Life, normally thought of as an insurer, has declared its macho intention to grab 10 per cent of new mortgages within a year. With a standard variable rate of 6.55 per cent, 0.9 points below other lenders, it might achieve it.

Legal & General is offering mortgages at 6.50 per cent, initially discounted to 4.8 per cent. And building societies, unhampered by the need to pay dividends to shareholders, are keeping their variable rates below those of the mortgage banks.

The price war is increasingly fought in public and through the press. No longer do lenders restrict their business to customers buying a home.

With the number of housing transactions tumbling by 10 per cent last year, that would mean competing for fatter slices of an ever-diminishing cake.

Instead, they publicise hard-hitting headline-catching rates with the aim of luring borrowers away from other lenders.

Societies such as the Scarborough will go as far as offering a rate of 1.35 per cent for the first year of the mortgage - the catch is a whopping redemption penalty: 6.25 per cent of the amount repaid if you redeem the loan in the first six years.

For lovers of cash, Northern

Rock will give customers 8 per cent of their loan in an upfront cash lump sum.

Abbey National and Alliance & Leicester entered the fray yesterday with similarly stunning deals.

In a copycat riposte to Halifax, Abbey is advertising "some of its lowest rates ever". It is offering a rate capped at 6.25 per cent for seven years, which allows customers to avoid paying more and means they could end up paying less. Chase De Vere, a mortgage spe-



James Crosby: competing for remortgages

cialist, is offering 10-year fixed rates at just 5.79 per cent.

Customers no longer stick to one lender for 25 years - they switch lenders to get their payments down. Luring customers is made easier by the fall in long-term interest rates.

Lenders can go to the money markets and get a tranche of long-term money at such a low rate of interest that it can be lent on, at a profit, at 5 or even 4 per cent.

All this spells gloom for the big mortgage banks. Halifax, which still lends 19 per cent of

the country's existing mortgages, saw its share of new mortgages sink to a third of its normal level last year. Lesser falls were experienced at rival banks such as Abbey National.

While Halifax struggled, building societies enjoyed a bumper year, capturing unprecedented levels of new business from Halifax and others.

Conversion to plc status, once heralded as the way for lenders to expand and diversify, has been of questionable value to Halifax's business. Customers have left in droves and Halifax experienced a net outflow of £482m in the first half of last year.

Worse, conversion means Halifax must please the City - something it is signally failing to do. Mike Blackburn, Halifax chief executive, retired in December amid widespread rumours of a rift with Jon Foulds, the chairman.

Its strategy of becoming the UK's top financial services group, by buying insurers and investment houses, has foundered.

Market valuations are too high, Mr Blackburn used to say, to justify an acquisition. And far from having too little access to capital - a prime justification for conversion - the lender now has too much. Its surplus capital stands at £3.8bn.

In a report on UK banks, Salomon Smith Barney, the investment bank, said: "Attention will again focus [this year] on the deployment of surplus capital. The group desperately needs to address its chronic over-reliance on the mortgage and savings market."

With 77 per cent of its profits coming from mortgages and savings, Halifax first needs to stem the outflow of funds.

James Crosby, the new chief executive, is trying to regain its market share by competing for re-mortgages with better rates. But the low rates are a double-edged sword. Because Halifax is pressed by public opinion to offer them to everyone, its own customers could switch to the new deals en masse.

Because the new deals are less profitable, that means smaller margins. For Halifax, the battle for market share looks unprofitable even if it wins.

The smaller converted societies - Alliance & Leicester, Woolwich and Northern Rock - are starting from a much smaller base than Halifax, but their share of the market also shrank in 1997, the year they converted.

With the housing market beginning to slip, prospects for the market do not look good. Analysts point out that the market is not being driven so much by demand for mortgages but by the low cost of credit.

The mortgage price war could get worse. Salomon Smith Barney predicts the banking sector will see a decline in earnings this year as the economy enters a technical recession.

Bad debts are likely to rise by 50 per cent, according to Salomon's. With them will rise repossessions - a public relations headache for lenders.

"With £800bn of customer advances, even a modest [recession] will severely damage the sector's profits. We believe the sector's earnings forecasts will come under substantial pressure," Salomon's said in its report.

With profits under pressure, lenders would normally be expected to be very cautious about offering cut-price deals. But competition is so tough that lenders are forced to offer lower rates just to hang on to their customers.

In today's mortgage market, customers are the only ones laughing.

MPs attack ministers for meddling on rates

BY DIANE COYLE

THE GOVERNMENT's new policy arrangements, which give the power to set interest rates to the Bank of England, have "shown signs of strain", according to MPs.

A report from the Treasury Select Committee, charged by the Chancellor with monitoring the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), raps ministers for appearing to pressure the Bank into cutting interest rates during the autumn.

The MPs expressed concern about suggestions that Chancellor Gordon Brown had tried to pressure the Bank into cutting interest rates by revealing, on a trip to Washington in early October, that the Treasury would be slashing its growth forecast.

Yesterday's report con-

cludes: "We welcome assurances by the Treasury and the Bank that the Treasury is not attempting to pressurise the MPC. We believe that if the credibility gains of the new monetary framework are to be maintained it is important that the MPC should not only act independently but be seen to act independently."

However, it adds: "It is also important that neither the Treasury nor the MPC should feel itself constrained from making its views publicly known."

The MPs say the turbulence in the world economy has tested the new economic framework, which includes rules for the Government's fiscal policy as well as the monetary

arrangements. "In practice the new framework has shown signs of strain."

The world economic slowdown is bound to affect the UK, according to the report. But the MPs recommend that even if the Chancellor's Budget plans for spending and borrowing turn out to be over-optimistic because of the slowdown, he should not try to tighten fiscal policy to make up for it.

They also back reform of the International Monetary Fund and better regulation of speculative hedge funds.

The Chancellor is due to give evidence next week to a House of Lords committee monitoring the work of the MPC, as is Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, the following week.

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MAIN MOVERS									
RISES					FALLS				
PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG	PRICE(P)	CHG(P)	%CHG				
Aluminium	195.50	15.00	12.70	Steel	104.50	-0.20	-0.19		
Barrat	44.50	34.00	11.80	Marl & Spun 338.75	-0.75	-0.22			
Bleach	82.50	6.00	10.70	ML Lark	80.00	-0.50	-0.62		
Brass	1055.50	100.00	10.30	Stearns	112.00	-0.50	-0.45		
Brass Ind	112.50	10.50	10.30	Dentist	77.50	-0.50	-0.64		
Brass Ind	57.00	54.00	10.10	Chloroquine	242.50	-10.00	-4.12		
Mayflower	137.50	10.50	8.27	Scapa	191.50	-7.50	-3.92		
Mayflower Ind	145.00	10.00	7.92	Marl (WH)	113.50	-0.50	-0.44		
Mayflower Ind	65.50	5.00	8.77	Bald (WH)	93.50	-0.50	-0.53		
Mayflower Ind	495.50	25.50	7.59	Boots	930.00	-50.00	-5.26		

MARKET LEADERS									
TOP 20 VOLUMES at 5pm									
Stock	Vol.	Bank	Vol.	Bank	Vol.	Bank	Vol.	Bank	Vol.
Shell	34,958	27.2m	Shell	14,416	10.3m	Shell	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
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BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300
BP Amoco	32,726	27.2m	BP Amoco	14,416	10.3m	BP Amoco	10,300	7.5m	10,300

FTSE 100 INDEX									
HOUR BY HOUR									
Open	5550.1	11:00	5560.1	Up 10.0	15:00	5569.1	Up 9.0	19:00	5570.0
5550.1	12:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	16:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	20:00	5572.5	
5550.1	13:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	17:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	21:00	5572.5	
5550.1	14:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	18:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	22:00	5572.5	
5550.1	15:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	19:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	23:00	5572.5	
5550.1	16:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	20:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	24:00	5572.5	
5550.1	17:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	21:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	25:00	5572.5	
5550.1	18:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	22:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	26:00	5572.5	
5550.1	19:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	23:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	27:00	5572.5	
5550.1	20:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	24:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	28:00	5572.5	
5550.1	21:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	25:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	29:00	5572.5	
5550.1	22:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	26:00	5572.5	Down 3.5	30:00	5572.5	
5550.1	23:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	27:00					
5550.1	24:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	28:00					
5550.1	25:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	29:00					
5550.1	26:00	5565.5	Up 5.4	30:00					
5550.1	27:00	5565.5	Up 5.4						
5550.1	28:00	5565.5	Up 5.4						
5550.1	29:00	5565.5	Up 5.4						
5550.1	30:00	5565.5	Up 5.4						

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Stock	Price	City	Vol.	Bank	Price	City	Vol.	Bank	Price
55 New York Stock	333.0	0.2	-0.52						
185 New York Stock	227.0	45.2	-2.22						
187 New York Stock	40.0	0.0	-0.00	-1231					
188 New York Stock	203.5	1.5	-0.00	-1231					
112 New York Stock	176.0	10.0	-0.25	-1455					
113 New York Stock	127.0	0.2	-0.21	-1768					
114 New York Stock	171.0	0.0	-0.00	-2772					
115 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-2937					
116 New York Stock	36.5	0.1	-0.00	-3070					
117 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
118 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
119 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
120 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
121 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
122 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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124 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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126 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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128 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
129 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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131 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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135 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
136 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
137 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
138 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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146 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
147 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
148 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
149 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
150 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
151 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
152 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
153 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
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188 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
189 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
190 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
191 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
192 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
193 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
194 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
195 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
196 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
197 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
198 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
199 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					
200 New York Stock	115.5	0.0	-0.00	-3070					

LEISURE & HOTELS									
Stock	Price	City	Vol.	Bank	Price	City	Vol.	Bank	Price
300									

[illegible]

OTHER SPOT RATE

BG burns bright as fragile Footsie drifts

IS MORE shareholder-friendly action planned at BG, British Gas as was? Although Footsie fell again as the stock market continued to fret about the problems in Brazil, and to a lesser extent China, shares of the former nationalised group powered ahead 29.25p to 409.50p.

BG has already returned more than £1bn to shareholders and hived off the Centrica domestic gas operation.

A further dividend is widely expected, and there are hopes that it will announce some form of distribution, possibly a special dividend or the creation of buyback shares, when it rolls out its year's results next month.

In the present market turmoil BG clearly has defensive merits although its sprawling exploration activities have increased the element of risk.

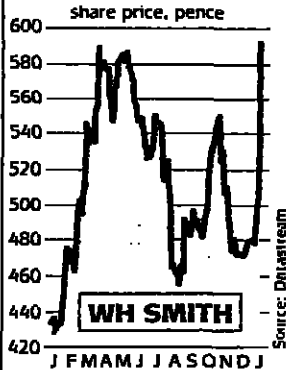
The shares have been one of the best Footsie performers in the past year. They were just

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



ON-LINE, the computer group, continued its spectacular run - up another 17.5p to 75p.

Director Clem Chambers has sold more shares to improve what is a highly illiquid market. He now has 31.9 per cent after unloading 125,000. Because he is a reluctant seller he has been given options over 125,000 shares at the prices at which he sold - 50p, 60p and 70p. The shares were 16.5p on Monday.

below 300p in the spring and nudged 430p in November. When in 1996 the group was the joker in the Footsie pack, the shares fell to 119.5p.

BG scored the second biggest Footsie gain. Top of the leader board was Dixons, which on its figures and attraction as an Internet play, soared 100.5p (after 114p) to a 1,058.5 peak.

Footsie, in heavy trading, fell 29.9 points to 5,820.2 - at

one time it was up 87.7. Conditions were much calmer than on Wednesday when shares were roared by the Brazilian devaluation. But the market's fragility was underlined by Footsie's volatility.

Still, despite further weakness in New York, two-way trading was the order of the day with buyers prepared to mop up what they perceived to be cheap stock.

Turnover topped 1.3 billion shares, with brick maker Ibstock the most heavily traded as bidder CRH bought, in a single deal, the 138.7 million shares held by Wienerberger, the Austrian group, at its 70p offer price. CRH now has 80.5 per cent of the capital. Ibstock held at 69.5p.

Marks & Spencer, following its calamitous profits warning, came next, accounting for 62.5 million. The once proud king of the high street led the Footsie retreat, suffering a 53.75p collapse to

339.75p, its lowest since 1993. The price was 664.5p only 18 months ago.

Not surprisingly its suppliers caught the Marks chill. Northern Foods tumbled 9p to 113.5p and Terranova 2.5p to 83p. Dewhurst, the clothing group, fell 6.5p to 77.5p and the letrics supplier Peter Black 14p to 245p. The Marks misery even extended to supermarket Asda, off 4.5p to 153p, and J Sainsbury, 11.75p to 449.75p.

The rest of the Christmas messages were mixed. Great Universal Stores rose 26p to 607p but Boots lost 60.5p to 938p. Storehouse retreated 9.5p to 112.5p and computer games retailer Gamea checked down 62p to 103.5p. House of Fraser rose 4p to 57.5p and Rosebys fell 1.5p to 83p.

Sears jumped 34p to 344.5p as retail entrepreneur Philip Green, backed by the Barclays brothers, bid 340p a share. The offer was rejected but the market expects a Green victory or a counter-offer.

WH Smith, presumably on its Internet ambitions, jumped 54p to 581p, a peak.

Beers were a little firmer after their shenanigans. Bass improved 1.5p to 788p as BT Alex Brown became more positive. Whitbread frothed up 23.5p to 799p with Alex Brown saying buy, but SG Securities offered sell advice and plans to cut its profits estimate.

Insurer GRI, where the market is growing tired of awaiting bid action, fell 2p to 335.5p, although Schroders suggested a 440p break-up value.

Vodafone improved 12p to 1,051.5p as Alex Brown said the shares could be worth 1,500p if the AirTouch deal went through on "acceptable terms".

Telewest Communications, with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson support, gained 15.5p to 218p. Compass, the contract caterer, rose 25p to 725p with Paribas suggesting a 930p target.

Hall Engineering hard-

ened 12p to 119p as aggressive TT launched a hostile 97p per share cash offer, which was promptly rejected by Hall, an engineer, strengthened 3.5p to 66p as Edward La Bas lifted its stake to 18.76 per cent.

Mirror, the newspaper group, gained 2.5p to 173p as hopes rose that its off-off merger with publisher Trinity could be on again.

There were rumours of corporate action among fund managers. Johnson Fry jumped 18.5p to 133.5p. One suggestion was that the smaller Parake fund management group planned a link, possibly a reverse takeover. Parake rose 15.5p to 360p, highest since 1996.

Rackwood, a mining company, firmed 0.75p to 4.75p. Robert Young, whose haulage company has a 6 per cent stake, has become managing director. The company's share price has collapsed from its

SHARES OF Cortec, the struggling drugs developer which three years ago topped 400p, rose 2.75p to 27.5p on hopes that Nomura, a keen follower of the drug fiddlers, will lift its stake.

Former chairman and chief executive Glen Travers sold 0.25 per cent and now has just under 5 per cent. Nomura, with 6.33 per cent, is thought to be keen to mop up the balance of the Travers interest.

level of 62p two years ago. Abbot, the oil services group whose shares fell on Wednesday on worries that its merger with Norway's PetroSafe had hit trouble, recovered 18p to 159.5p.

The food group, John Lushy, held its price at 6p after seeing analysts.

SEAQ VOLUME: 1.3 billion
SEAQ TRADING: 82,366
GILT INDEX: 116.23 +0.25

Investment: Betting group shrugs off profits warning

Stanley Leisure hit by punters' good luck

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

MOST MANUFACTURERS would settle for the kind of profit warning that Leonard Stanley Leisure, the chairman of Stanley Leisure, the UK's third biggest betting group, issued yesterday. Mr Stanley said profits were down in the third quarter because the punters had a run of good luck.

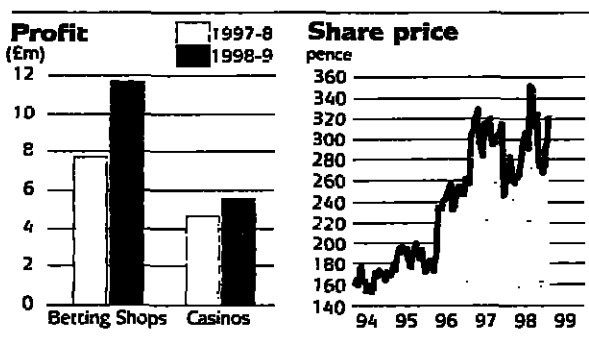
In the six months to 1 November, however, the luck was running with the bookies and he was able to report a 43 per cent improvement in profits to £14.5m. Turnover from the chain of 480 betting shops increased by just 2 per cent to £214m, with all the increase coming from the 11 shops acquired during the half year.

However, profits rose by 52 per cent from £7.7m to £11.7m, including a one-off profit of more than £1.3m on takings of £4m from World Cup soccer. This was helped by a better profits mix, which is company-speak for an increase in takings from numbers games, betting machines and betting on soccer where the structure of the bets favours the bookies much more than in the staple business of horse race betting.

Profits from the group's 24 casinos went up 18 per cent to £5.6m, with a healthy increase in margins, but once again the

STANLEY LEISURE: AT A GLANCE

Trading record	1995	1996	1997	1997	1998
Full year to 30 Apr				Half year to 1 Nov	
Turnover (£m)	293	318	407	232.2	239.0
Pre-tax profits (£m)	17.1	14.8	20.4	10.1	14.5
Earnings per share (p)	10.7	9.3	12.6	6.3	9.0
Dividends per share (p)	3.08	3.33	4.0	1.4	1.65



increase in turnover was small and came from acquisitions. The weather can play a big part in the final quarter of the year when rain and frost can reduce the amount of racing.

Casino profits continue to benefit from the gradual deregulation of the industry. The rules currently allow six slot machines in each casino with a maximum jackpot of £1,000, although 10 machines should be allowed by May or June this year. There are plans to allow up

to 25 machines per casino with no maximum stake, and potential pay-outs of £100,000.

Betting is not immune to recession, especially an increase in job insecurity, but it is less sensitive to a downturn than manufacturing and Stanley Leisure certainly withstood the recession of 1991 with relative ease.

Stanley, which was outbid for the Coral chain of betting shops last year, has no intention of paying the £1bn that Nomu-

ra is asking for the William Hill chain that formerly belonged to Brent International.

It is contemplating a number of potential acquisitions but Mr Stanley also sees little point in trying to bring betting shops into the era of the Internet and spread betting. Instead it prefers to concentrate on refurbishing its shops and providing punters with the atmosphere of working-men's clubs.

Mike Kershaw, Stanley Leisure's chief executive, is retiring and will be replaced in April by Robert Wiper, currently chief executive of the coach division of National Express, it was announced yesterday.

Mr Wiper has no direct experience of the betting game, but his background, which includes National Tyres and Pickfords Worldwide, gives him experience of customer-focused industries, which is an essential element of Stanley Leisure's business, Mr Stanley said yesterday.

Mr Stanley remains "confident of a satisfactory outcome for the full year". Analysts yesterday edged their forecasts for the year to 30 April up by about £1m to £28.5 to 29m, and earnings per share of 17.8p to 18.5p. But the market was more circumspect and the shares shed 8p to 303.5p.

ML Labs has hope despite losses

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

LABORATORIES CHANGES at ML Laboratories, which now writes off research and development spending in the year it is incurred, converted a modest profit into a loss of £455m in the year to the end of September 1997, but losses almost doubled to £84m in the year to September 1998 on turnover down from £6.9m to £5.36m.

Spending on research and development rose by £1m to £7.7m, other spending rose £1m to £7m, and income from product licensing and option fees fell from £4.1m to £1.2m. The company's net assets shrank from £21.4m to £12.9m.

plies of the active ingredient.

These will go a long way to meeting the capital costs of the manufacturing plant, which ML can use to produce for its own purposes.

By biotech standards ML is now a mature business, with four products approved for marketing, three launched and eight in late development. Its track record is also reassuring, with four out of four products to date securing the approvals necessary to convert years of expenditure into future income.

It should provide investors with some comfort that the company's efforts are concen-

trated on products with higher-than-average hopes of success, chief executive Stuart Sim said.

The product range, including those already being marketed and in the pipeline, is also well spread. It includes treatments for renal disease, respiratory infections, cancer treatments and virology.

The analyst consensus is that the current year will show another loss of around £8m, but there are realistic hopes that it can move into the black in 1999/2000. The shares eased back 9p to 88p yesterday, but they have been edging higher ahead of the results.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Game (I)	21m (25.7m)	0.740m (0.017m)	0.7p (0.2p)	1p (-)	26.02.98	25.01.98
Stratistics Resources (F)	-	0.555m (0.226m)	0.5p (-)	-	-	-
Grainham Computing (F)	23.063m (8.88m)	3.003m (0.867m)	5.73p (1.17p)	0.6p (0.5p)	03.05.98	25.01.98
ML Laboratories (F)	5.36m (8.85m)	-8.44m (-4.55m)	-5.82p (-3.14p)	-	-	-
Spirits & Outdoor Media Int. (I)	5.08m (-)	0.431m (-)	0.81p (-)	-	-	-
Stanley Leisure (I)	239.02m (232.2m)	14.5m (18.13m)	9.0p (8.3p)	1.65p (1.4p)	20.02.98	25.01.98
(F) - Final (I) - Interim						

LIFE FINANCIAL FUTURES

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long Gilt	Mar-99	119.58	119.74	119.07	119.923
5 yr Gilt	Mar-99	108.58	-	-	63.00
German Bund	Mar-99	117.20	-	-	-
Italian Bond	Mar-99	114.75	114.87	114.47	115.05
Japan Govt Bd	Mar-99	111.80	111.80	111.30	111.00
3 Mth Sterling	Mar-99	94.51	94.53	94.48	16332.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	94.50	94.52	94.46	27558.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.80	96.85	96.84	1160.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.80	96.85	96.84	240097.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	97.13	97.13	97.12	547.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	98.70	98.71	98.62	23115.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	98.60	98.60	98.52	7900.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.90	-	-	43892.00
FTSE 100	Mar-99	5832.00	5960.00	5805.00	39430.00

LIFE FTSE 100 INDEX OPTION

Settlement Price: 5820.20	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
Jan	50	32	419	252	243	373
Feb	50	32	419	252	243	373
Mar	50	32	419	252	243	373
Apr	50	32	419	252	243	373
May	50	32	419	252	243	373
Jun	50	32	419	252	243	373
Jul	50	32	419	252	243	373
Aug	50	32	419	252	243	373
Sep	50	32	419	252	243	373
Oct	50	32	419	252	243	373
Nov	50	32	419	252	243	373
Dec	50	32	419	252	243	373

ENERGY AT 5:00PM

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Brent Crude (5/barrel)	Mar-99	119.58	119.74	119.07	119.923
WTI Crude (5/barrel)	Mar-99	114.75	114.87	114.47	115.05
Gas oil (5/barrel)	Mar-99	111.80	111.80	111.30	111.00
Heating oil (5/barrel)	Mar-99	114.75	114.87	114.47	115.05
Coal (5/tonne)	Mar-99	114.75	114.87	114.47	115.05
Electricity (5/MWh)	Mar-99	114.75	114.87	114.47	115.05

GOLDMAN SACHS COMMODITY INDICES

Index	1970-100	1980-100	1990-100	1997-100	1998-100
Base Date	100	100	100	100	100
1970-100	134.92	-0.71	-0.52	215.26	-37.32
1980-100	183.65	0.00	0.00	231.23	30.57
1990-100	44.07	-0.52	-1.17	85.96	-48.67
1997-100	128.24	0.00	0.00	168.79	-24.02
1998-100	155.57	0.24	0.15	193.23	-19.35
1999-100	380.42	-1.01	-0.27	663.54	-17.93

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	1.0000	-	-	-	-
Australia	2.6114	2.6093	2.6071	2.6050	2.6030
Canada	0.6525	0.6525	0.6525	0.6525	0.6525
Denmark	0.1366	0.1366	0.1366	0.1366	0.1366
Euro	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
France	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Germany	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Greece	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Hong Kong	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
India	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Italy	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Japan	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Malaysia	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
New Zealand	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Norway	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Portugal	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Saudi Arabia	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Singapore	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
South Africa	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Spain	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Sweden	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
Switzerland	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666
USA	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666	0.1666

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	1.6525	1.6525	1.6525	1.6525	1.6525
Brazil	1.7996	1.7996	1.7996	1.7996	1.7996
China	1.3681	1.3681	1.3681	1.3681	1.3681
China Rep	50.691	50.691	50.691	50.691	50.691
Egypt	5.6390	5.6390	5.6390	5.6390	5.6390
Ghana	390.32	390.32	390.32	390.32	390.32
Hungary	20.15	20.15	20.15	20.15	20.15
Indonesia	1377.7	1377.7	1377.7	1377.7	1377.7
Kuwait	0.4999	0.4999	0.4999	0.4999	0.4999
Nigeria	156.16	156.16	156.16	156.16	156.16

INDUSTRIAL METALS

Commodity	Price	Change	3 month	Change	6 month	Change
Aluminium HG	1219	-11.00	1227.5	-11	661200	7875
Aluminium LG	1020	-12.00	1030	-10	95660	20
Copper A	1434	-14.00	1461	-12	604425	825
Lead	496	-4.00	499	-500	4	66975
Nickel	4380	-5.00	4450	-5	62322	-324
Tin	5045	-55.00	5045	-5050	-30	8730
Zinc	917	-0.50	936	-937	-2	316050

PRECIOUS METALS

pm	fx	per	62	Day's	year's	pm	fx	per	62	Day's	year's	Coins	Year's	
			chg	chg	chg				chg	chg	chg		chg	
Platinum	353.50	0.50	-21.50			Platinum	213.90	0.95	-17.50			Kruggerands	282.97	1.64
Palladium	312.00	1.00	70.50			Palladium	188.80	1.15	39.75			Sows	66.37	
Silver		5.14	-0.05	-0.56		Silver		3.12	-0.03	-0.39		Nobles	386.05	
Gold		285.65	0.20	6.15								Maple Leaf	284.66	-14.70

SPORT

Boxing: Prizefighting is no longer the big draw that once proved so alluring in a gambler's paradise
Tyson a sideshow in desert Disneyland

RICHARD WILLIAMS
IN LAS VEGAS

TO LAS VEGAS, boxing may represent just about the town's last overt connection with dirty business. In a desert neonopolis of gargantuan pastel-shaded theme-park hotels, where visitors arrive at a rate of 100,000 a day to experience the replication in steel and fibreglass of ancient Rome, Arthurian England, modern New York, belle époque Monte Carlo or verdant Tuscany, and to drop their dollars at Prada and Versace as well as at the slots and gaming tables, a prizefight is no longer the main event but a curious sideshow.

Dan Goossen, the promoter of tomorrow night's Tyson-Botha heavyweight fight, claimed that 10,000 tickets had been sold by midweek, at prices ranging from £125 to £750 for ringside seats, and was hoping for a sell-out. But Don Welsh of the MGM Grand Hotel, where the fight is being held, will be satisfied with somewhere under 12,000, which would leave 2,000 empty seats – and would still represent 2,300 fewer people than came in through the doors of the Grand Arena for each of the two Tyson-Holyfield fights. Modern facilities can be configured to suit the anticipated attendance, and the MGM has a realistic view of the public's expectation of decent entertainment when Mike Tyson makes his latest comeback against a willing but limited Afrikaner who is virtually unknown outside the fight world.

In the short, hectic life of Las Vegas, boxing has played a colourful but peripheral role. The point of the place was always extracting profit from human weakness, by whatever means. But when Las Vegas came to life, US prizefighting had its natural homes in the big, tough cities of the East Coast and the Midwest.

In 1938, when Captain Guy McAfee of the Los Angeles Police Department realised that the election of a reforming mayor would mean the end of his sideline as the boss of an illegal gambling operation, he resigned, drove north into Nevada, where gambling had been legitimised earlier in the decade.

Just outside the city limits of Las Vegas, on Highway 91, McAfee bought a club called the Pair-O-Dice. It was he, thinking of his old home, who began referring to a four-mile stretch of the highway as "The Strip", which is now the location of all the 5,000-room palaces that symbolise the modern city. McAfee's club, renamed the 91, was joined three years later by El Rancho Vegas, the first casino motel, built on land costing \$50 an acre and boasting one craps game, one roulette wheel, two blackjack tables, and 40 cottages for guests.

In 1946 the Mob joined the game when Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel took over the half-built Flamingo Hotel with funds from Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky, although a \$5m (£3.2m) overrun on building costs, coupled with his inability to resist the



The billboards proclaim tomorrow night's Tyson v Botha heavyweight summit – but the patrons of the MGM Grand in Las Vegas appear more interested in the city's rival attractions. Allsport

temptation to send his girlfriend off to Switzerland with some of his masters' cash, cost him his life before the joint turned its first profitable dollar. But by then the town was taking shape, and the 1950s saw the opening of the Desert Inn, the Sahara, the Sands, the Dunes, the Riviera and the Tropicana, by which time land on either side of the desert highway was costing \$20,000 an acre, and the whole town had become an enterprise zone for crime families from across the country.

Gambling and prostitution were the hares, but entertainment played a major part in keeping the customers happy. The lounges and showrooms presented top-line acts, with Sinatra and Presley serenading mobsters and their molls at the Sands and the Sahara respectively. Throughout the Fifties, another regular attraction was the sight and sound of atmospheric nuclear tests, conducted 60 miles north of the town at the Nevada Test Site. Favoured customers were invited on to the roof of the Desert Inn to enjoy the spectacle of the mushroom cloud.

There were more than 100 such tests throughout the 1950s, and they enhanced the image of Las Vegas as a place in tune with the modern world. But when the US government

began to come to its senses, reducing the frequency of tests in preparation for the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the town needed something equally explosive to take their place. Thermo-nuclear fisticuffs were the answer.

Las Vegas has little in the way of a boxing infrastructure. It has two gyms in the scruffy old downtown area, the Golden Gloves and the picturesque flyblown Johnny Tocco's, and it has the Nevada Athletic Commission, which has grown accustomed to arbitrating in troublesome disputes and lending a sympathetic area to boxers who want their licences back. But boxing in Las Vegas has always been about the big stuff, the high rollers.

"It began in the early '60s," Marc Ratner, the commission's executive director, told me this week. "There was a promoter called Mel Grebb, and the first big fights were held in the Convention Center. The hotels liked it from the start, because the fights brought in their best customers."

Along with free air tickets, free board, free food and beverages, the select high rollers could expect complimentary ringside seats. The luckiest of them saw Sonny Liston dispose of Floyd Patterson with a second consecutive first-round knock-

out on July 22, 1963, in front of 7,000 fans. Two years later Patterson suffered another humiliation at the Convention Center when the referee stopped his fight against Muhammad Ali in the 12th round, saving the older man from further punishment from the hands and tongue of the new champion.

In between times, the Sahara Hotel rented the hall to present two concerts by the Beatles during their 1964 US tour, but the boxing promotions continued to gather pace. All beat Quarry, Bugner and Lyle there, before losing in the final stages of his career in punishing fights against Leon Spinks and Larry Holmes. He lasted the full 15 rounds against Spinks but retired after 10 rounds against Holmes in a fight for which most observers felt that, at the age of 38, he should never have been granted a licence.

The penalties for overextending or otherwise mismanaging a heavyweight boxing career had by then become painfully obvious in the sight around Las Vegas of Joe Louis and Sonny Liston, two former world champions reduced to the level of servitude. They were employed by Ash Resnick, the sporting director of Caesars Palace, built in 1966 with \$19m (£12m) illegally advanced by

the pensions fund of the Teamsters Union.

Louis, a beloved figure, acted as a greeter of celebrity guests – and was in addition required to accompany Resnick on less public missions to collect the casino's debts. Liston, who trained for the last fights of his career at Johnny Tocco's gym, was also used to put the frightened on reluctant debtors. Both fighters shared not just a background in the dirt-poor South but a disastrous fondness for heroin and cocaine. Louis's life dwindled away, but there are still rumours that Liston's death from an apparent overdose in 1970, aged 38, was caused by an agency other than his own carelessness.

As Las Vegas continued its exponential growth, big fights continued to be among the featured attractions: Holmes fought Berbick, Cooney, Witherspoon, Smith and McCall, Hagler and Hearns produced three rounds of unforgettable mayhem at Caesars Palace's new outdoor arena in 1985. Leonard beat Duran, Hearns and Hagler. McGuigan lost his World Boxing Association featherweight title to Steve Cruz in 110 degrees of desert heat at Caesars, and Tyson won all three of the titles that made him undisputed champion in town – the World Boxing Council belt from

Berbick in 1986, and the WBA from Smith and the International Boxing Federation from Tucker in the following year. Most recently, Oscar De La Hoya took the ring at Caesars to wrest the WBC light-welterweight crown from Julio Cesar Chavez.

"It's a proven fact that boxing brings the best customers to town," Ratner said, "and that gambling revenues go up as a result." But events surrounding recent Tyson fights have cast a shadow over the city's willingness to host big fights in an era when its primary marketing emphasis has switched from the traditional high rollers, with their parallel interests in booze, broads, betting and boxing, to vacationing family groups attracted by a Disneyland in the desert.

The night that the rap star Tupac Shakur was shot to death at an intersection while heading south on Flamingo in September 1996, he had attended the Tyson-Seldon fight at the MGM Grand, after which he and his crew had beaten up a group of LA Crips in the hotel lobby. And the disgrace of Tyson's second fight against Holyfield in June 1997, with its ear-biting incidents, was compounded by an incident in the same lobby, when sounds resembling gunfire caused the casino to be closed

for two hours, at a huge financial cost to the owners.

So whatever the vested interest may say, the relationship between Las Vegas and professional boxing is currently tenuous. For a variety of somewhat opaque reasons to do with the law and Don King, the next world heavyweight title fight – Holyfield v Lennox Lewis – is taking place in Madison Square Garden, one of the sport's ancestral homes but neglected by recent generations in favour of the greater inducements offered by the casino hotels. Tomorrow night's fight is being promoted in a much lower key than Tyson's previous comeback affairs, as if MGM were wary of scaring off customers.

In Las Vegas, history is history and there will be no tears shed if boxing goes the way of the beautiful old Sands and Dunes hotels, demolished to clear land for establishments that will recreate the landmarks of Paris and Venice. Potential customers for these attractions, willing to leave their money behind in Las Vegas at the rate of some \$70m a day, may not want to see their artificial skyline, soon to be enhanced by the addition of replicas of the Eiffel Tower and the campanile of St Mark's Square, overshadowed by the silhouette of a looming Mike Tyson.



Chris Nicholson and Ed Smyth, of Australia, sail to fourth overall in the 49ers yesterday. Allsport

Percy on the path of progress

BRITAIN'S OLYMPIC singlehanders were poised for more success today as Iain Percy scored his third win of World Championship series in Port Phillip Bay and he goes into the final race holding the bronze medal position. Coming hard on Ben Ainslie's gold medal triumph in the Laser, the British team was in buoyant mood last night and hopeful that Percy, twice a United Kingdom national champion in the Laser and a friend of Ainslie's, would earn the recognition which his startling talent deserves.

This is the 22-year-old's first full season in a Finn, though he contested a few events in 1997, and at his first major event, the European Championship in Portugal, last year he won bronze. He comes from a Winchester family with a strong sailing heritage and is improving rapidly.

Out in front is the reigning Olympic champion, Mateusz Kusnierevich, with the Swede Frederik Loof in the silver medal position.

SAILING

BY STUART ALEXANDER
in Melbourne

With two races remaining in the three-man Soling, Britain's 1996 representative in Savannah, Andy Beadsworth is still eighth as Denmark's Stig Westergaard holds on to the lead he established on the second day. He is clear of the triple gold medalist, Jochen Schuemann of Germany, who has a six-point lead on the third-placed Roy Heimer, the Dutch heavy air specialist.

Conditions were tough, too, for the opening five races of the 49er Skiff finals. Held just off the beach at Port Melbourne, swimming skills were often as important as sailing as even the experts struggled to avoid capsizing.

The defending world champion, Chris Nicholson, from Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, and

his new crew, Ed Smyth, recorded an eighth and a 10th place, followed by a disqualification. That was discarded, however, and the sixth and third places he scored in the final races of the day, plus the first he carried over, left him fourth overall.

Australia were thus second, third and fourth, Emmett Lazich and Euan McNicol slipping to third after leading as Adam Beashel and Teague Cziolowski saw America's Morgan Larson and Kevin Hall take the lead, on an equal points count-back, with two close-of-play wins.

However, Italy's Bruni brothers, Francesco and Daniele, were set to improve their sixth position as they protested after a collision with Britain's Paul Brotherton and Neal McDonald. Their boat was holed in the fifth race, and they could not make the final rubber, so they will be asking for average points, which would be two fifth places.

Britain's Budgen brothers also

had to discard a disqualification in the first race of the day, for a premature start. They are still in touch with the leading group in fifth, followed by Brotherton and McDonald in ninth, who face a drop in position if they are disqualified for the collision. Tim Robinson and the 1996 470 silver medalist, Ian Walker, are 15th, but the current national champion, Ian Barker, with Nicholson's former crew Daniel Phillips standing in for the injured Simon Ellis, had a dismal day, going into the club-house last. They broke a rudder pin, forcing them to retire from the second race, and did not finish in the time limit for the penultimate rubber as they capsized so many times on the downwind legs.

A fourth win in the final race for Australia's Grant Geddes and Craig Watkin just tipped, on a countback, Britain's defending world champions, Charles Stanley and Moray Gray, in the International 14s.

US chief goes Davis Cup head-hunting

Sampras and Agassi are targeted for national duty as 60-year-old Judy Levering tries to restore American pride before the tie against Britain. By John Roberts

THE NEW woman in Andre Agassi's life is not the type to shirk a challenge. Judy Levering's first task is to persuade tennis's biggest crowd-puller to bury past differences and play for the United States against Britain in Birmingham at Easter in a match that marks the start of the Davis Cup centenary.

Levering, 60, has just become the first woman president in the 118-year history of the United States Tennis Association. She has taken over from Harry Marmion, whose relationship with Agassi became so sour that the Olympic champion vowed never to play for his country again, or at least not while Marmion was in office.

"That's M-A-R-M-I-O-N," Agassi spelled out to amplify his antipathy.

Agassi's feud with Marmion, dating from a dinner prior to the opening of the Arthur Ashe Stadium at the United States Open in 1987 and coming to a head when Agassi refused to play in last year's Davis Cup semi-final against Italy in Milwaukee because it clashed with his charity gala in Las Vegas, is only one of Levering's legacies.

Pete Sampras, another Milwaukee absentee, has told the American captain, Tom Gullikson, that he will not be playing in the Davis Cup this year because his quest for individual honours comes before playing for his country. The Wimbledon champion is of the opinion that the American public does not care about the Davis Cup. Fatigue caused Sampras, the world No 1 for six consecutive years, to withdraw from the Australian Open, which starts in Melbourne next Monday.

"It is not that they are not patriotic, I think it is just that they can only do so much," Levering said on returning to New York this week after visiting both Sampras and Agassi at their homes, catching Agassi before he left for Melbourne.

"I think the door is cracked a little bit," Levering added. "But I am certainly hopeful that in the end they will play, particularly in this centennial year. The last thing I said was, 'You can certainly change your mind up until the last minute, and I mean that.'"

Levering's mission to talk with Sampras in Los Angeles and Agassi in Las Vegas - "reaching out to these players and trying to establish a relationship with them" - may result in pressure from the USTA for the Davis Cup to be played every two years rather than annually.

"I left with the impression

that if we could get it to every other year, it probably would make a lot more sense to the players," Levering said. "I think they both feel that the perception that the public has of Davis Cup is a very confused one."

"When we won the Cup in Russia [in 1995], it wasn't but a little over a month later than we are talking about playing another tie, and the public says, 'Well, didn't we just win it?' And the players are just thinking, 'Well, we just won it.' Then they have to turn around and start all over again. 'I am troubled at the fact that the situation exists where it is hard for them to play. I really want them to know they are our American players. We are extremely proud of them. We are extremely supportive of them in their goals, and we want to help them where we can. I think they would like it to be easy for them to play Davis Cup and if we can help make it that



Levering: New USTA boss

way, we will do it. I want to work with them. I don't want the Davis Cup to create a wedge between the USTA and the players."

"The USTA in some way needs to stand up with those players in forcing change in some of the scheduling. But that being said, it is very important to the sport that these guys represent us well in the Davis Cup, because it is very visible and when they don't it causes controversy in the game, and that doesn't augur well for the sport."

Levering is considered an insider, having been elected to its management committee in 1997, chaired its media commission and served on the Fed Cup committee.

Dwight Davis, a Harvard student, donated the trophy for international competition, starting with a match between the United States and the British Isles in Boston in 1900. But would the ITF back American calls for such a radical

change now that a total of 131 nations participate in the various zonal groups?

"I think the ITF wants to consider things that will make it better for tennis worldwide," Levering said. "The way the ITF has structured it makes it very difficult for changes to be made quickly. So that is the dilemma? What the [16] World Group countries might want may not suit the other groups, where Davis Cup is their only source of revenue. When they have ties in their home country, that is the only time they are able to make any money. So it is not in their interest to have it every other year. But yet they also have an influence on the voting should the ITF choose to make a change."

"We are, by far, the biggest national association for tennis in the world, and so - although you never have enough money to do all that you want to do - we don't really have as many of the financial problems that some of these other national associations have."

While confirming that she intends having further talks with Sampras and Agassi before the first round tie in Birmingham (2 to 4 April), Levering stressed that she is not only concerned about America's two leading players.

"We don't want to just take for granted those players who have been there for us all the time, such as your Todd Martins," Levering said. "I certainly don't want people to think that we are ignoring them. That is not the case at all."

A native of Kansas City, where Britain's Roger Taylor and his fellow members of the "Handsome Eight" helped launch open tennis down by the stockyards in 1968, Levering appears to sympathise with the sensibilities of today's leading players.

After talking with Sampras and Agassi, she promised that the players would have a greater say in Davis Cup matters in future - even to the extent of the captaincy. "What was brought up was that the players have some say in who the captain is," Levering said. "Not necessarily that they didn't like the present captain. There is an issue and I think it is a very valid one. I told them, at least certainly next year, they would be consulted. Somebody ultimately has to make a decision, but certainly they would be consulted in 2000."

It will be interesting to see if any of this changes Sampras's mind about national service and coaxes Agassi to soar like a bald eagle.



Tim Henman serves during his worrying defeat to Yevgeny Kafelnikov in Melbourne yesterday

Graf shows her fighting spirit

STEFFI GRAF produced a stirring comeback to beat Venus Williams in the Sydney International quarter-finals yesterday. Graf, suffering from stomach pains, fought back from a set down and a break down in the third set to win 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.

"It was a tight situation and I guess I probably had a better attitude towards it," she said. "I didn't feel nervous at all but I

felt she was getting nervous."

The German, tuning up for next week's Australian Open, appeared to be heading out of the tournament after she fell 4-3 behind in the third set against one of the modern game's most determined players. But she called on her vast reserves of experience to win the next four games.

Williams said the difference between the players was in the

mental approach. "I think I learnt a good lesson today. She definitely wanted to win more than I did and I know I'll have to work harder in the future."

Lindsay Davenport kept her grip on the top ranking with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Switzerland's Patty Schuyder. The American was in danger of surrendering the world No 1 ranking to Martina Hingis if she failed to reach the last four and her Swiss

rival took the Sydney title. Hingis powered past Belgium's Dominique Van Roost 6-2, 6-0 and said of her ranking duel with Davenport: "It means a lot to me, I want to get it back."

In the Kooyong tournament, Tim Henman lost his second round-robin match, against the Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, 6-2, 1-6, 6-2. A lacklustre Andre Agassi lost to Sweden's Thomas Enqvist 6-3, 7-6.

Britons seeded in top eight

TIM HENMAN has been named as No 6 seed for the Australian Open, which begins next week in Melbourne. The British No 1 is ranked one place above his world ranking, with his compatriot Greg Rusedski seeded No 8.

The defending men's champion, Petr Korda, who is at the centre of a drugs controversy, is unseeded as the organisers decided to abide largely by the world rankings.

Lindsay Davenport is the No 1 seed for the women's title ahead of the defending champion, Martina Hingis, but they will both be looking over their shoulder at Steffi Graf, who is seeded 10.

Most of the leading men will meet tomorrow at a mandatory meeting of the ATP Tour players' council to discuss Petr Korda's positive steroid test, with sentiment apparently split over whether their Czech colleague should be expelled from their ranks.

What would have been a mundane meeting gained urgency when, in December, the International Tennis Federation released sketchy details of Korda's positive drugs test at Wimbledon.

The Australian Open champion, who denied knowingly taking any illegal substance, plans to attend the meeting, saying he has nothing to hide, but several players over the past week have expressed misgivings over the case and many want an explanation of the exceptional circumstances that led to his light penalty.

Korda tested positive to the performance-enhancing steroid nandrolone at Wimbledon and was subsequently stripped of the \$92,529 (£55,000) prize-money and ranking points he earned.

An independent ITF Appeals Committee issued the lighter penalty because, despite finding him guilty of a "category one" doping offence, it accepted his plea that he had not knowingly taken the drug and believed there were exceptional circumstances.

The case has also called into question the anti-doping credentials of the game's ruling body and caused seemingly irrevocable damage to Korda's reputation. Korda has maintained he did nothing wrong, saying on Tuesday that he had been unable to find out how the drug got into his system. However, he refused to comment on what the exceptional circumstances might be, saying the matter was in the hands of his lawyers.

It is that sacred attitude which has ranked most with the players, although the attitude of many has apparently softened in the past week after learning a little more about the details of the case.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN Seedings: Men: 1 M Hingis (Swe), 2 A Cornea (Col), 3 P Rafter (Aus), 4 C Hume (Esp), 5 A Agassi (US), 6 T Henman (GB), 7 M Rusedski (GB), 8 G Rusedski (GB), 9 R Kuyek (Neth), 10 V Kafelnikov (Rus), 11 G Hantschke (Ger), 12 A Cornea (Esp), 13 C Pineau (Fr), 14 M Philippoussis (Aus), 15 T Martin (US), 16 T J Larsson (Swe), 17 L Davenport (US), 18 M Hingis (Swe), 19 J Novotna (Cze), 20 A Sanchez Vicario (Esp), 21 V Williams (US), 22 M Seles (Rus), 23 M Pierce (Fr), 24 P Schuyder (Bel), 25 C Hurn (Aus), 26 S Kuznetsov (Rus), 27 D Van Roost (Bel), 28 A Kournikova (Rus), 29 I Speranza (Rus), 30 S Kuznetsov (Rus), 31 N Pietrangeli (Ita), 32 A Conner (USA).

Hamilton's divided loyalty

AS IF Australia were not a sufficient handful, England have now embarked on a cricketing dispute with Scotland. The Ashes may not be involved but the future of the World Cup may yet depend upon it.

The subject of this conflict is Gavin Hamilton, the talented Yorkshire all-rounder who may or may not play for England or Scotland in the World Cup next summer.

Hamilton has already played for Scotland and may be good enough to be selected for England in the tournament next summer. There lies the problem. Hamilton played one match for Scotland against Bangladesh last summer, which seemed to tie him to his country of origin. But the International Cricket Council has now ruled that he can still play for England since Scotland is only a minor cricketing nation, an associate member of the ICC rather than a full one.

Hamilton could be selected in England's preliminary squad of 30 for the World Cup and Scotland were yesterday

CRICKET

By STEPHEN BRECKLEY in Melbourne

wondering where that would leave their selection options. Conceivably, he might also be included in their squad.

"We could do with Gavin," Scotland's director of cricket, Jim Love, said, "but in the end it is up to Gavin and we certainly will not be putting pressure on him. We took up the case with the ICC because the

Aamir discarded by Pakistan

AAMIR SOHAIL, who captained Pakistan to successive series defeats at home against Australia and Zimbabwe, has been dropped from the forthcoming tour of India.

Aamir, who had already been replaced as captain by Wasim Akram, was not included in the 16-man squad announced yesterday for the tour. No reason for his omission was given by the Pakistan Cricket Board, although he has stayed away from a preparatory training

original rule was that having played for Scotland he could not then go on to play for England. We are pleased that rule has been lifted and it applies to other countries as well but would not want to stand in the way of Gavin's career. It's quite understandable that he wants to play for England."

The prospect of Hamilton, 24, being among the 11 who might or might not contest the World Cup final for England at Lord's next summer is a slim one. But he is a talented swing

bowler who ended last summer with his county in splendid style. "Jim has a career and we quite understand that," said Love.

The difficulty has not been helped by the fact that Hamilton at present is neither in England nor Scotland. He is playing club cricket in Australia.

Shane Warne was due to lead Australia at the MCG for the first time last night for the match against England, after the captain, Steve Waugh, was ruled out of his third successive one-day international with a hamstring strain. "It will be great," Warne said before the game. "I'm enjoying doing the captaincy, I always have, and it brings out the best in you. It's great to get the opportunity to do it but I'll be handing it back to Steve when he is ready."

That is likely to happen on Sunday, as Waugh confirmed that he should definitely be fit for the game with England in Sydney. Waugh said he might even have played in the match that began last night, but decided to take no chances.

"It's probably a good move because there is a lot of cricket coming up," he said.

Between the players was in the

mental approach. "I think I learnt a good lesson today. She definitely wanted to win more than I did and I know I'll have to work harder in the future."

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Lara rap for selectors deepens the malaise

THE SIGNS that lead to Test cricket's rare and ultimate humiliation - the 5-0 drubbing - always become progressively more obvious as the series progresses. The West Indies have inflicted it on opponents often enough to have recognised them at a glance during their disastrous tour of South Africa over the past two months - a rash of injuries, selectorial panic, failure by key individuals, a growing sense of inferiority, rumours of internal dissent, doubts over the captaincy, not to mention a superior adversary.

Brian Lara's team, 4-0 down entering the fifth Test at Centurion Park, Pretoria, today, have mirrored the England of Ian Botham and David Gower in the 1980s that suffered at the hands of those, ironically, led by the present manager, Clive Lloyd. Nor is there much to raise hopes that it can avoid the first such clean sweep in West Indies' history.

To those many woes, Lara has added yet another distraction to sidetrack his efforts, and those of the team management, to inspire his players for the final challenge.

"It has been a difficult situation because, for the first time, the selectors have named a one-day squad while the Test series is still on the go," he said yesterday. "Some of the guys who are here for the Test series are not going to be here for the one-dayers and this, psychologically, will have a negative effect on them."

Once more, the West Indies are likely to be without one of their two great bowlers, this time Curtly Ambrose. The burden of too much intense cricket has been increasingly evident in his body language and he went down with the identical hamstring muscle strain in the fourth Test last week that left his veteran partner, Courtney Walsh, writhing in pain in the closing stages of the third. Walsh has had two weeks to

mend and three days of nets have persuaded him that he is ready to return for his 166th Test, but it would be too risky to include Ambrose as well.

Instead, Reon King, the 23-year-old Guyanese, will be obliged to fill the breach for his Test debut 24 hours after flying in yesterday morning along with the three other replacements for the one-day series - Keith Arthurton, Keith Semple and Neil McGarrell.

It all epitomises the misery that has dogged the West Indies throughout this series. In contrast, South Africa's premier fast bowler, Allan Donald, yesterday passed a fitness test in his hamstring strain and will be ready to torment his opponents again in an unchanged team.

SOUTH AFRICA: G Kirsten, M H Gibbs, J H Kallis, D J Gullian, W J Cronje, J N Rhodes, S M Pollock, M V Boucher, A A Donald (capt), J J van der Merwe, P R Adams. 12th man: A G Prince.

WEST INDIES: (from): D Ganga, P A Wallace, B C Lara, S Chandrapaul, C L Hooper, S C Williams, F L Rafter, R D Jacobs, N A M McLean, R N Lewis, C E L Ambrose, M Dillon, F A Rose, J R Murray, C B Lambert, K L Arthurton, R F Semple, R D King, N McGarrell.

مكتبة الامير

24/FOOTBALL

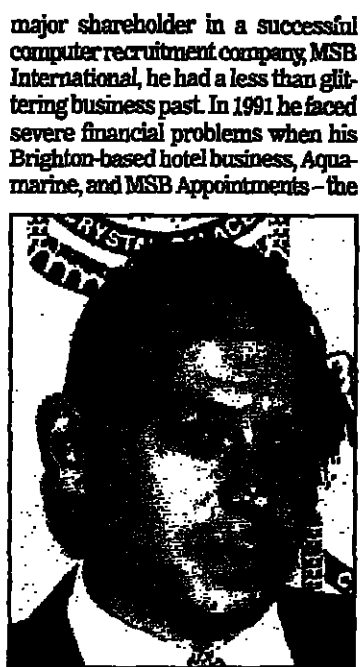
Palace pay a high price for Goldberg's coup

High-profile takeover of south London club has resulted in turmoil on and off the pitch. By Nick Harris

IT WAS less than two years ago that Ron Noades, the former chairman and owner of Crystal Palace, took a telephone call from a man who said he was a lifelong fan of the club and had plans to transform it. Noades had never heard of the caller but soon discovered the potential investor was a moderately wealthy businessman and entered into negotiations about how they might work together. Mark Goldberg duly realised his dream when he bought the club from Noades last summer, but the transformation of the club has not been quite what he had in mind.

Goldberg spent a large part of yesterday negotiating the departure of Terry Venables, the man he brought in to be the club's saviour following their relegation from the Premiership last summer. Not only have the team failed to perform on the pitch since the much-heralded return of the former England manager, but the club's finances have been severely stretched and Goldberg's dream has become ever more distant.

Although by 1997 Goldberg was a



Goldberg: Paid over the odds

major shareholder in a successful computer recruitment company, MSB International, he had a less than glittering business past. In 1991 he faced severe financial problems when his Brighton-based hotel business, Aquamarine, and MSB Appointments - the

company that became MSB International - were put into voluntary creditors' liquidation. "I was too busy winning business and didn't pay attention to the money side," he was later quoted as saying of those failures.

Goldberg's takeover of Palace was hardly a straightforward affair. He became a director of Palace in August 1997, putting £3m into the club, which gave him an option to buy it for £30m or, in the event that he would be unable to do so, to have a 10 per cent stake for his investment. Negotiations for his purchase of the club dragged on as Goldberg tried to come up with the money. Noades eventually dropped the price to £22.8m, but even when Goldberg sold his 2.5m shares in MSB, he was still short of the capital he needed. Noades loaned him £4.5m to complete the deal (and also loaned Palace £1.5m to keep their then £5m overdraft at bay). The takeover was finally completed in June last year. Yet even Noades admitted his buyer had paid over the odds, leaving himself without the working capital to turn the team around.

After gaining control, Goldberg made much of his five-year plan for the club and spoke ambitiously about the future. However, the £10m for transfers which Venables said had been promised failed to materialise. Instead, players were sold for a total of more than £7m, although nearly £6m was reinvested in the transfer market.

One of the problems for any club

PALACE'S TRANSFERS UNDER VENABLES	
IN	OUT
Lee Bradbury from Man City ..£1.5m	Nail Shipperley to N Forest ..£1.5m
David Amis ..£800,000	Marc Edwards to Coventry ..£1.2m
Beitar Jerusalem (Isr) ..£800,000	Valerian Ismael Lens ..£1.2m
Craig Moore Rangers ..£800,000	Dean Gordon M'burgh ..£900,000
Sun Jihai and Fan Zhifan	Paul Warhurst Bolton ..£800,000
Dalian Wanda and Shanghai Shenhua (China) ..combined £1,350,000	Hermann Hreidarsson
Matthew Gregg Torquay ..£400,000	Brentford ..£750,000
Gordon Patric Rangers ..£300,000	Bruce Dyer Barnsley ..£700,000
Nicky Rizzo Liverpool ..£300,000	Tony Folan Brentford ..£100,000
Michalis Siomos	Robert Oulian and Danny Buxall
Toni Instonbrook (Aut) ..£200,000	Brentford ..combined £40,000
Dean Austin Tottenham ..free	Carlo Nash Stockport ..free
Walter Del Rio Boca Jrs (Arg) ..free	Michale Padovano Metz ..free
Andy Turner Portsmouth ..free	
Craig Foster ..free agent	
Paul Hatters ..free agent	
TOTAL ..£5.65m	TOTAL ..£7.19m

relegated from the Premiership is a wage bill based on Premiership income. While the departure in the autumn of men like Michele Padovano and Valerian Ismael helped to reduce Palace's costs, some of the incoming players have not been cheap in terms of wages. Moreover, as Goldberg indicated when he complained about having a 40-strong squad, the sheer size of the playing staff has clearly been a drain on resources.

The wisdom of some of the signings is also open to question. Having sold Dean Gordon for £900,000, Palace replaced him with David Amis, an Israeli international who cost £800,000. He has started only six matches so far, and so is unlikely to have his work permit renewed, which could see him leave without a transfer fee being paid. Palace also spent £400,000 in October on a goalkeeper, Matthew Gregg, an 19-year-old from Torquay, who has yet to play for the first team. The following month £300,000 was paid to Rangers for Gor-

dan Petric, who in recent weeks has not been able to get into the side. One of the few players of genuine quality at the club, the promising Matt Jansen, is likely to be sold soon for around £4m as Goldberg attempts to alleviate Palace's severe financial difficulties.

Goldberg announced last month that a locally-based company, Tramp Oil, had invested in Palace and said their investment had "strengthened the financial position of the club in contrast to recent speculation". However, the extent of Goldberg's financial problems is underlined by the fact that he is being sued by his own solicitors for more than £400,000 in relation to the takeover. In addition, a public relations firm working for Goldberg said yesterday that it was owed more than £50,000.

It is all a far cry from Goldberg's vision for Palace. Only last month he wrote in the club programme: "I am proud to have assembled one of the strongest management teams in the country, and a squad who, over the five years, will take this club to heights it has never experienced before."

Record-breaker Ford targets 1,000-game mark

Harold Wilson was at No 10 when Mansfield's veteran wing-back played the first of his 824 Football League games. By Phil Shaw

LAST WEEKEND, Grandstand interviewed him and replayed two of his long-forgotten goals, while the shock-horror revelation that he occasionally eats fish and chips made the *News of the World*. After nearly a quarter of a century of unstinting but unsung service, Tony Ford is an overnight success.

Four months away from his 40th birthday, Ford cannot burn off opponents as he did in his prime. But, if he is in his usual wing-back berth for Mansfield Town at Plymouth tomorrow, he will breeze past Terry Paine, the former England winger with whom he now shares the record for an outfield player of 824 appearances in English League football.

Ford's career spans a period of great upheaval within the sport and society. When he first turned out in the reserves for his home-town club, Grimsby, at 15, there was no Sky, no sponsors or all-seater stadiums. The most exotic imports were Scots and the only agents were of the 007 variety. Ron Atkinson was cutting his managerial teeth with Cambridge and Manchester United were in the old Second Division. Sir Stanley Matthews, whose No 7 shirt Ford

would inherit at Stoke, had been retired only 10 years.

Harold Wilson was ensconced in Downing Street, unperturbed by the advent of Margaret Thatcher as Tory leader. The last American troops were airlifted out of Vietnam as the war ended. Charlie Chaplin was knighted and Arthur Ashe won Wimbledon, where the local football club beat Atherstone to clinch the Southern League title.

Despite being part of a successful side at grammar school, Ford planned to take an engineering course when he left. He had set foot on a League pitch only to join the pitch invasion when Grimsby won the Fourth Division title as he was about to become a teenager. Then the Mariners' manager, Tommy Casey, invited him to play for the second team and was sufficiently impressed to sign him during the summer.

Ford had not reached 16 and a half and was earning £10 a week when Casey blooded him at Walsall. It was 1975: so long ago that the ground, like those of two of his clubs, Stoke and Sunderland, has long since been bulldozed into oblivion. "I just remem-

ber it was very fast," he said. "I was thrown on for a few minutes and it went by in a blur."

Left-backs began to say much the same of Ford, whose pace was a key factor in Grimsby's successive promotions in 1979 and '80. After spells with Sunderland (on loan), Stoke (where he formed a strong partnership with Lee Dixon) and West Bromwich (with whom he won two England B caps alongside David Platt, Paul Gascoigne and Steve Bull), he returned to Blundell Park. Later it was on to Bradford City (again on loan), Scunthorpe and Mansfield, where he is also assistant to a progressive young manager, Steve Parkin.

"I've played at every club except Tottenham, Wycombe and Blackpool, if not at all the new stadiums, and in every position except goalkeeper. Grimsby switched me to centre-forward one season, Stoke used me at centre-half once, and I've played left-wing and both full-back roles. I've been lucky in that I've only ever had two injury lay-offs of five weeks each. The hernia and knee ops I had were done during the summer."

The relationship between fitness and food was less well documented when Ford was starting out; he recalls downing a fillet steak en route to his debut. These days, apart from the odd visit to a chip shop, it is more likely to be pasta, chicken, fish or simply toast followed by yoghurt. He sees no harm in a beer or two and, due to the influence of a dietician called Jeannie Baker at Scunthorpe, fills up on fluids before a game to prevent the dehydration that leaves players toiling.

There were relatively few black footballers when Ford first emerged. However, apart from "a bit of stick" at Chelsea and "the odd comment" from an opponent, he has not suffered racist abuse. "Either I'm thick-skinned or very fortunate, but it honestly hasn't been a problem."

Indeed, when you probe for his worst experience in football, he grimaces at the memory of FA Cup humiliations by Woking and Gateshead with West Brom and Grimsby respectively. Ask whether he regrets never having performed at Premiership level and he reflects, in typically positive vein, that "it wasn't as if I had the chance and turned it down".

Besides, he is finally enjoying some long overdue glamour and glamour. He first realised he was within sight of Paine's tally when television covered Mansfield's match with Carlisle two years ago. The commentary mentioned he was eighth in the all-time list. "It was



Mansfield's Tony Ford: I've played at every club except Tottenham, Wycombe and Blackpool, if not all the new stadiums, and in every position except goalkeeper

news to me, but I checked in *Rothmans' Yearbook* and I was just behind Jimmy Dickinson and several others bunched together.

"I'm not a great one for records, though now that it's there, it's a good feeling. The recognition has been nice." Another congratulatory fax landed as he spoke, from an old Grimsby colleague, Clive Wigginton, who now runs a salvage business. The Queen's telegram can not be far behind.

"The next landmark would be

1,000 games in all competitions," Ford mused. "I must be around the 950 mark now. I'd also like to play in four different decades like Stan Matthews. I'll definitely play some part next season. My body will tell me when it's time to give up, but somehow I don't think I'll go on until I'm 50!"

Nevertheless, players keep soldiering on into their late thirties at a time when the game is getting faster. How come? "We get by using knowledge and experience - they say

your brain gets quicker as your legs get slower."

More than anything, Tony Ford carries on because his passion for playing is undimmed. "What a wonderful way to earn a living, doing something you liked doing as a kid. It's taken me round the world and I've met some great people. I also believe that Mansfield could get up into the Second Division this year, and I want that feeling of promotion once more before I stop. It's been a long time."

Battles ahead at Maine Road

BY MARK PIERSON

MANCHESTER CITY are heading for a new power struggle, with the family of the late Stephen Boler, a former director, ready to sell their large stake in the club. The troubled Maine Road club may face more behind-the-scenes intrigue with the news that 28 per cent of the shares are about to come on to the market.

Boler left his sons in charge of his holding in City. They also have a say in where Peter Swales' old shares go. Now a scramble is about to start for a slice of the club that would give the buyer the whip hand, with a major, if not majority, holding.

The former chairman Francis Lee, who has kept his £3.9m stake, could be interested in making a comeback, but would need big-money backers to get it right this time. Lee has returned to Maine Road for games despite being hounded out of the club by supporters, and he has told friends that he is waiting for his moment.

Mike McDonald, a life-long City fan, is now clear to bid after selling up at Sheffield United, where he was chairman. McDonald has tried and failed in the past to gain control, but is now in a better position to mount a takeover bid.

A Manchester solicitor Raymond Donn, who was looking for buyers for Boler's shares when the latter was alive, is also chasing outside backers. Donn has sent a dossier to prospective foreign investors looking for the money to finance a takeover.

Boler was asking for around 75p each for his 8,000,000 shares prior to his death - a total of £6m that understandably scared off buyers. There could be a drop in the price, however, if the right buyers are found. The Boler family appear to want the shares to go to someone who could be a positive influence, rather than see more damaging power struggles at the club.

Bobby Robson's PSV Eindhoven are trying to rescue Alessandro Pistone from problems at Newcastle United. The former England manager is in contact with the Italian defender's agents about a £2m deal to take Pistone to the Netherlands in the next few weeks.

The Newcastle manager, Rudi Gilli, may come out of retirement to honour one of the club's most celebrated former players. He is expected to play a part in Peter Beardsley's testimonial on 27 January.

John Hartson will appear before a Football Association disciplinary hearing on 2 February over his training ground assault on his West Ham team-mate, Eyal Berkovic, late last year.

The Southampton defender, Ken Monkou, has lost his appeal to the FA over the decision by the referee Dermot Gallagher to send him off in the FA Cup third-round tie at home to Fulham. Monkou will serve a three-match ban for the dismissal, starting this weekend against Liverpool at Anfield.

LONG-PLAYING RECORDS

ALL-TIME TOP 10 OUTFIELD PLAYERS	
624: Tony Ford	653: Dave Beasant
1975 to date (age 39): Grimsby, Sunderland, Stoke, West Bromwich, Bradford City, Scunthorpe, Mansfield	1979 to date (age 39): Wimbledon, Newcastle, Chelsea, Grimsby, Wolves, Southampton, Nottingham Forest
624: Terry Paine	647: Neville Southall
1957-77: Southampton, Hereford	1980 to date (age 40): Burny, Everton, Port Vale, Southend, Stoke, Torquay
795: Tommy Hutchison	644: Rob Newman
1965-91: Blackpool, Coventry, Manchester City, Burnley, Swansea	1981 to date (age 35): Bristol City, Norwich, Wigan, Southend
782: Robbie James	639: Colin Greenall
1973-94: Swansea, Stoke, QPR, Leicester, Bradford City, Cardiff	1980 to date (age 35): Blackpool, Gillingham, Oxford, Luton, Bury, Preston, Chester, Lincoln, Wigan
777: Alan Oakes	638: Peter Beardsley
1959-84: Manchester City, Chester, Port Vale	1979 to date (age 37): Carlisle, Newcastle, Liverpool, Everton, Newcastle, Bolton, Manchester City, Fulham, Hartlepool
770: John Trotter	632: Neil Redfearn
1960-80: Swinton	1992 to date (age 38): Bolton, Lincoln, Doncaster, Crystal Palace, Watford, Oxford, Barnsley, Charlton
764: Jimmy Dickinson	619: Dave Whitson
1946-65: Portsmouth	1980 to date (age 37): Norwich, Everton
761: Ray Sproson	606: Steve Ogilvie
1950-72: Port Vale	1977 to date (age 41): Chesterfield, Liverpool, Shrewsbury, Colchester
758: Billy Bonds	606: Jim Stannard
1964-88: Charlton, West Ham	1980 to date (age 38): Fulham, Charlton, Southend, Fulham, Gillingham
757: Frank Worthington	603: David Seaman
1966-88: Huddersfield, Leicester, Bolton, Birmingham, Leeds, Sunderland, Southampton, Brighton, Tranmere, Preston, Stockport	1982 to date (age 35): Peterborough, Birmingham, QPR
	602: Brian Bloor
	1981 to date (age 38): Everton, Bolton, Coventry, Bristol City, Ipswich
	601: Neville Hodges
	1978 to date (age 38): Plymouth, Torquay
	598: John Leslie
	1979 to date (age 38): Leeds, Arsenal, Leeds, Arsenal
	591: Tony Adams
	1980 to date (age 35): Colchester, Manchester City, Northampton, Bradford City, Northampton, Peterborough, Luton, Colchester
	590: Neal Blake
	1979 to date (age 37): Aston Villa, Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Portsmouth, Leeds, Stoke, Bradford City, Exeter
	586: Colin Calderhead
	1981 to date (age 33): Mansfield, Swindon, Tottenham
	Research: Phil Shaw and Simon Bradbury

Allner back at Worcester as wheel turns full circle

GRAHAM ALLNER returned to the management game this week, less than a month after leaving Kidderminster Harriers.

After 15 mostly successful years in charge of the Aggborough club, with whom he won both the Conference and the FA Trophy, Allner's services were always going to be in demand. His new task is to steer Worcester City towards the Football League.

In succeeding George Rooney at

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK
BY RUPERT METCALF

St George's Lane, Allner is returning to his roots. He played for Worcester two decades ago, winning a Southern League championship medal with them.

Paul Davies, the experienced former Kidderminster striker, rejoins Allner as his player-assistant

manager after a short spell with Hednesford Town. "I am really excited at the challenge," Allner said. "Sleeping giant is an overused term in non-League football, but Worcester is an authentic case."

Worcester's chairman, Mike Sorensen, said: "The first priority is obviously promotion to the Conference as soon as possible, but our long-term target is reaching the Football League." City are securing planning permission for a 6,000-

seat new stadium, with the potential to increase capacity to 20,000, which they hope to start building in 2001.

Worcester currently occupy seventh place in the Dr Martens League Premier Division, 25 points behind the runaway leaders, Nuneaton Borough. Allner's first game in charge tomorrow is, however, in the third round of the Trophy at Havant & Waterlooville.

Elsewhere in the Trophy, the holders, Cheltenham Town, enter-

tain the Essex side Canvey Island. The tie of the round takes the Conference leaders, Kettering Town, to Kingstons, whose manager Geoff Chapple won the tournament three times with Woking.

Woking face a home tie against Folkestone Invicta, while Rushden & Diamonds resume their quest to reach Wembley, following their FA Cup defeat at Leeds, with a trip to Graham Roberts' Slough Town side. The latest managerial change in

the Conference has seen Telford United part company with the former Burnley manager, Jimmy Mullen. His former assistant, Alan Lewer, has taken caretaker charge at the Buck's Head.

Kidderminster have put Jimmy Conway, who was Allner's No 2, in charge of team affairs for the rest of the season. He will be assisted by Phil Mullen, a former Harriers striker who has stepped down as manager of Redditch United.

TOMORROW

HEADING BACK TO THE TOP:
GLENN MOORE ON SUNDERLAND'S ATTEMPT TO WIN BACK A PLACE IN THE PREMIERSHIP

SPORT

POWER IN THE SADDLE P23 • FORD, THE MODEL PRO P24

Merson angered by Gregory snub

PAUL MERSON has urged the Aston Villa manager, John Gregory, to show him the same "leeway" as his Middlesbrough counterpart, Bryan Robson, did in his continuing struggle to stay off drink and drugs.

Merson warned that there were troubled times ahead if Villa failed to appreciate the extent of his endeavours to overcome addiction problems. The England player is furious at the "negative vibes" that greeted him at Villa after his weekend trip to New York. He admitted to being "depressed and down" in recent weeks and

FOOTBALL
BY MARK PIERSON

that Gregory needed to recognise the importance of such breaks in his rehabilitation programme, as had Robson.

"If I felt guilty about what I had done, then I would put my hand up - but I know just how close I was to the edge in the past," Merson said. "Villa might have paid a lot of money for my services but you can't put a price on life and I know what I went through with my addictions. This wasn't me making a

flash sort of trip and I am not one of those people who thinks they are bigger than the club.

"What I did was right for me given my circumstances. I had the weekend off and needed to get away. Villa knew I was feeling down so I can't see what all the fuss was about.

"Bryan Robson was good as gold with such things. If I needed a few days off, to get away, then he would understand. There was one stage last season at Middlesbrough when I was feeling down that he was going to send me to Tenerife for a week. I had the same sympathy

from the managers when I was at Arsenal.

"If Villa want to get the best out of Paul Merson then the same leeway needs to be shown. If the boss [Gregory] here, doesn't understand then there are going to be problems."

Merson admitted: "If I am doing well and putting everything into the game then everything is all right. But when I am not doing the business or can't play a proper part, which has been the case with having the back problem, then that's when you get all sorts of things in your head. That's when I start to go

a little bit. I didn't say anything before I went away but I was injured, I wasn't in the team. I wasn't involved and it wouldn't have been very nice for me if I had gone back to Middlesbrough to watch Saturday's game.

"I asked the physio [Jim Walker] for the Monday off. He knew how I felt. He knew I was down. I was back on Tuesday, played in the reserves on Wednesday and felt OK. But all I've got since I've come back is negative stuff which is frightening - and it has really opened my eyes.

"Personally, it would have been nice for me if Villa had come out and said, 'Paul has gone away for a few days and when he comes back he will be buzzing,' but that hasn't happened. The manager hasn't spoken to me since I got back."

Merson made his comeback in Wednesday's reserve game but is pessimistic about being picked for Monday's home Premiership meeting with Everton.

"I was ahead of schedule by playing on Wednesday and think I can play for an hour on Monday and help to create chances," he said. "But I'm not optimistic

of being picked against Everton on Monday - and if that is the case then Wednesday was a waste of time."

Merson is unlikely to return to his addictions after the spat with Gregory, according to a leading psychologist, Cary Cooper, professor of psychology at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, believes the situation has arisen because of a "breakdown in communication" between the two men.

"Anyone who has an addiction is somebody who is not coping very well," Prof Cooper said. "When the pressure pushes

es them, they follow the way they perceive to be an easy way out. If Merson has had problems in the past, it shows that he hasn't coped with the pressure he has been under.

"There is going to be pressure in this game and he may feel from time to time that he needs to get away. It's what we call the 'fight-flight' reaction. Some people cope with pressure by fighting other people and others fight it by running away from it.

"It is total miscommunication between the two of them about what is expected of them."

Rovers captain under attack

BY ALAN NIXON

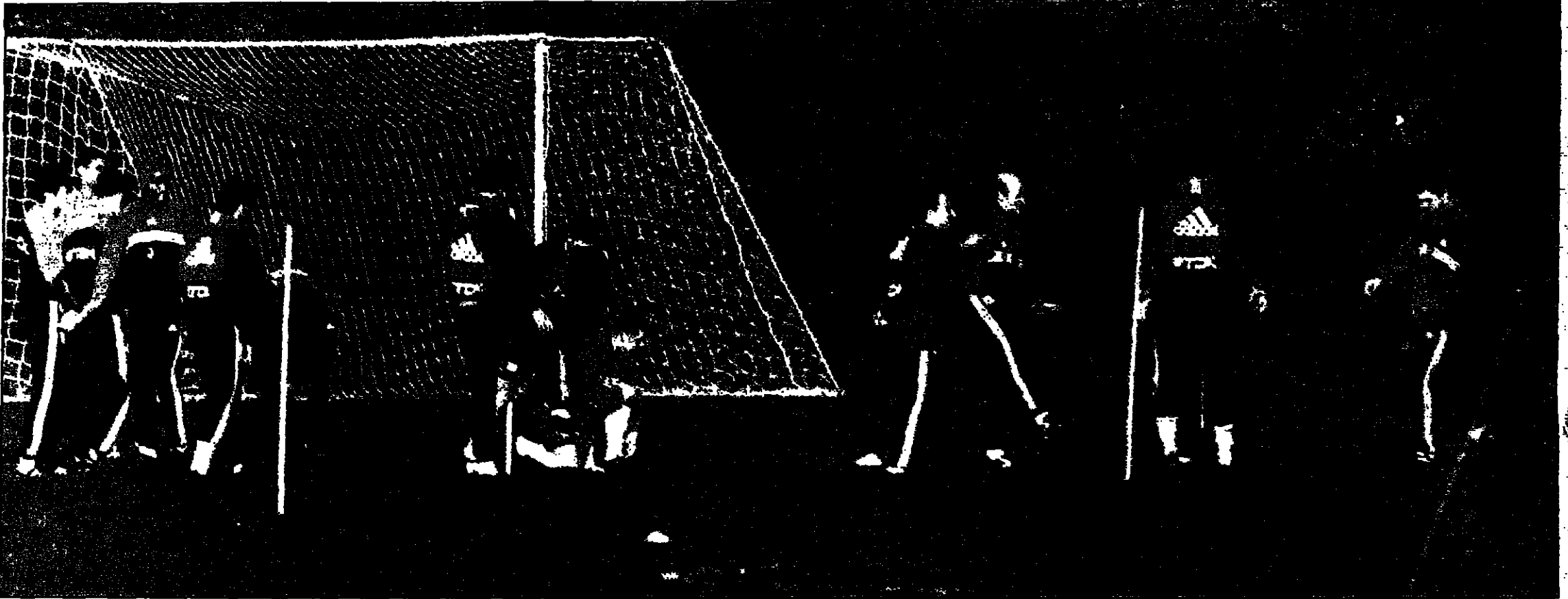
ROY HODGSON has broken his silence over his departure from Blackburn Rovers, claiming that the club's captain, Tim Sherwood, undermined his position as manager and helped to get him the sack.

Hodgson spoke out last night, attacking Sherwood, who has been critical of his managerial style since he was replaced by Brian Kidd. Now Hodgson has blamed Sherwood for the problems at Blackburn that led to his dismissal.

"The major factor was Sherwood's discontent at not being given permission to go to Tottenham," Hodgson said. "Up to that Tim had done a very good job in captaining the team and was also very supportive.

"However, he became very disenchanted with the club and everything around the place when the proposed move fell through. He spread a lot to the other players who didn't have the strength of character or personality or experience to stand up against him."

Hodgson admitted in an interview on Sky Sports news that he had mixed feelings about their success since his departure. When asked if he was pleased when Kidd's team won, Hodgson said: "I'd like to say yes but that might be a dishonest answer. They are still the players I brought to the club."



In the absence of Terry Venables, Steve Coppell (fourth from right) supervises the Crystal Palace squad at the club's Streete Court training ground in Surrey yesterday

Peter Jay

Venables and Goldberg reach breaking point

TERRY VENABLES and the Crystal Palace chairman, Mark Goldberg, spent yesterday attempting to negotiate a financial settlement to allow the former England coach to leave the struggling First Division club.

Venables stayed away yesterday morning from the club's Surrey training ground, where Steve Coppell - understood to be the favourite to take over as manager if and when Venables leaves - deputised for him. The Palace coach was thought to have been at a secret location in

BY NICK HARRIS

central London in meetings with Goldberg, whose silver Porsche sat empty for most of the day outside his office at Selhurst Park.

Venables' personal assistant, Ted Buxton, said he did not know how events would unfold at the club over the next few days, but added: "What happens to him [Venables], happens to the rest of us [the coaching staff brought in by Venables]."

Asked if he thought the Palace coach would still be in

his job come today, he said: "If him and Mark can't make a settlement, he will be."

The Palace assistant manager, Terry Fenwick, left Selhurst Park at 1.10pm refusing to comment over his future, although as he left he shook the hands of three members of ground staff and appeared to be saying goodbye. Fenwick said: "I've got nothing to say. You'll hear later, see you later."

Last night, Goldberg was summoned to an emergency board meeting to discuss the

current situation at the club. Several directors have resigned from the board over recent weeks and, with the recently-installed chief executive, Jim McAvoy, having already publicly criticised Goldberg's recent decision, the chairman's own future could even be called into question.

Having been forced to introduce widespread cost-cutting measures in a quest to keep the club afloat, he is under growing pressure to deal with the club's serious financial

problems. There also remains a question mark over Goldberg's ability to pay off Venables, given that he still has more than four years left to run on his lucrative contract, worth £750,000-per-year before bonuses. It was suggested last night that Venables wants a £1m settlement.

Goldberg is looking an increasingly isolated figure, with the latest person to resign being his public relations executive, Sara Pearson, who said her firm were owed more than £50,000 in

unpaid fees and expenses. Pearson, the chief executive of SPA, detailed in her resignation letter the problems she had encountered in her 13-month association with Goldberg with advice and agreed strategy ignored by him on an increasingly regular basis. "I have only ever wanted to help you win through and to see you succeed. But there comes a time when a Herculean

task such as this has to be seen as a lost cause. That time is now," she said.

Newcastle's John Barnes and Stuart Pearce have also been tipped as possible successors to Venables if Coppell does not get the job, although a source close to Barnes described a move to Selhurst Park as "highly unlikely".

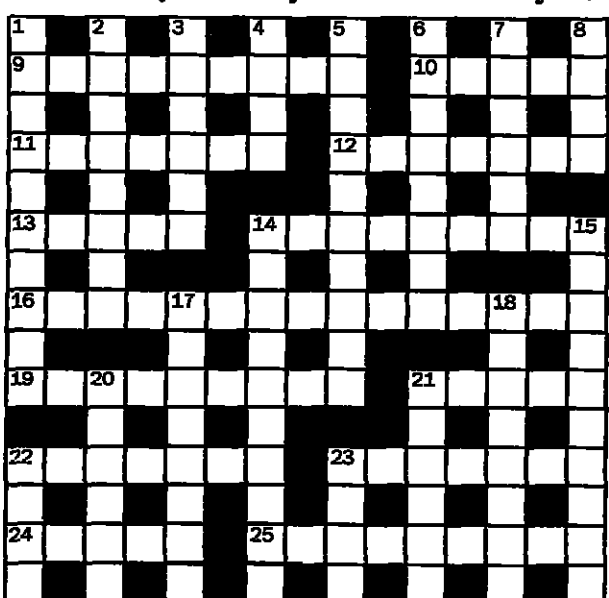
The Goldberg era, page 24

THE FRIDAY CROSSWORD

No.3820 Friday 15 January

by Phi

Thursday's solution



ACROSS
1 Prevent sideways tilt in schedule of things to be done (9)
2 Hard to supply backing for flag of European country (5)
3 North American city aware of being adjacent to hill (7)
4 Constituent of brew, the English brew with a force (3-4)
5 Funny women, with sex-appeal - indecent and smutty, ultimately (5)
6 North American city - not entirely smart area (9)
7 Pistol's partner, I emphasise, plugs male rapidly (8,7)
8 North American city architect's rival penning

line after line (9)
9 To some extent recalled Lynne, Femina or another girl (5)
10 Dog in row with Pa? (7)
11 Top quality beer knocked back - stuff fit for a king (7)
12 Permits returning to snatch a bargain (5)
13 Mars replanted ground (3,6)
14 McT's asworn, howled over - by me? (10)
15 Waste object gathered in flapping duster (8)
16 Meagre source of booze in Heaven (6)
17 Car fuel used up, covering miles (4)
18 Very tall order, removing

last disorderly queues (10)
6 Work in a spire revealing architect (8)
7 Films people going back into spy organisation (6)
8 One's ignored by head cook (4)
14 Rugby team's players, taking on the French, pass to the other side (10)
15 Patience was a noted feature of this impresario (5,5)
17 Always turning up sick before end of the morning signal (8)
18 Firewood - the sort left in top of grate (8)
19 Religious woman is turning almost strict (6)
20 Practise deception? Prisoner's curtailed mirth (6)
21 Sloppy food's an encouragement for dogs (4)
22 Regret bringing in Duke with bad manners (4)

Desert chase as drivers are robbed at gunpoint

RALLYING

BY MAC MCDIARMID
in Atar, Mauritania

MAURITANIAN TROOPS were hunting Tuareg tribesmen fleeing across the Sahara desert after robbing about 50 competitors in the Paris-Dakar Rally at gunpoint on Wednesday evening.

The drivers fell one by one into a trap set up by about 20 armed men about 30 miles from the end of the 12th stage in Tichit, Mauritania.

In all, 22 vehicles were stopped, of which four cars, three trucks and one motorcycle were stolen. The victims, none of them British, were abandoned in the desert, later making their way unharmed to the Rally bivouac at Tichit.

This is the second armed robbery suffered by the Rally this year. On 5 January, a Mitsubishi driven by Stephen Flech, the nephew of the president of the Volkswagen group, VAG, was stolen in the desert north of here.

"We were very scared - I thought I was finished," said Belgian truck driver Peter de Mulder after his four-hour ordeal. "The leader of the gang was calm, but the others were very edgy."

Another Belgian, Renard Guy, who was driving a press car, said, "They told us they would kill us if we tried to trick them. They took everything we had, but left us with water and

some cigarettes. We were able to squeeze into the vehicles they left and head for the bivouac." The one victim not searched, a woman doctor, was able to raise the alarm by satellite telephone.

"I had the fright of a lifetime," another driver, Eric Vigouroux, said, describing how he was separated from the other drivers in the dark by a man armed with a machine gun who demanded everything he had.

The highly organised gang was armed with Kalashnikovs and other automatic weapons. They had lain in wait in the lee of a dune, striking as darkness fell at 7.0pm local time. Vehicles were stopped at gunpoint as they arrived, some having their tyres shot out.

A "Tata Trucks" T-shirt worn by the gang leader suggested that they may have been the same group which stole two vehicles and shot up others near Taoudeni in Mali in last year's Rally. His parting remark, "Thanks very much - see you next year," supports this view.

Last week the Rally had successfully detoured to avoid the bandit hotspot of Gao in southern Mali. Relief was

short-lived: "Since you didn't come to Gao, where we were waiting, we came to see you here," the gang leader is reported to have said.

Saharan banditry has a long and complex history. For thousands of years, Tuareg warriors plundered salt caravans, a tradition updated by the robbing of race convoys. In recent years, the Tuaregs have fiercely resisted the imposition of frontiers and administrative barriers to their traditional way of life. Three years ago, they ostensibly surrendered to the regional authorities, and the race robbars are seen as the rump of that rebel force.

Mauritanian troops, aided by a Rally organisers' plane, began a hunt at dawn yesterday, with 300 soldiers sent north from Nema to head off a possible escape into Mali, while a similar force attempted to block the route to Algeria. By yesterday evening, three trucks and a four-wheel drive car had been abandoned by the thieves.

As for the Rally, organiser Hubert Auriol said that nothing could be gained by staying in Tichit, and that the race would continue normally. Simon Pavey, the motorbike rider whose progress is being tracked by the Independent, narrowly escaped being held up and is continuing in the Rally.

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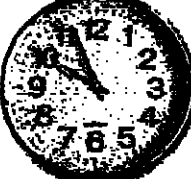

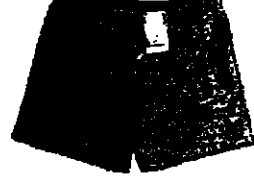


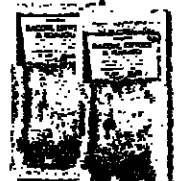
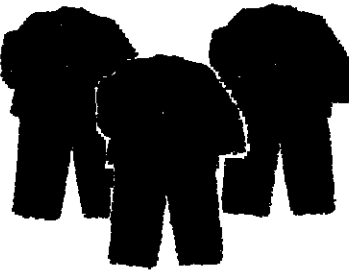



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FRIDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

Once upon a , it was the undisputed  of the high street. Britons swore by their  and their . Their  caused a revolution in home cooking and their  were the height of good taste. But then the  engaged in a bloody boardroom  and profits took a . What the  has happened to good old



It was as long ago as 1980, but I still remember how pleased my Mum was when I got a job at Marks & Spencer. It was, she said, such a terrific store, "and they are always so good to their staff". My grandmother, bless her, was equally chuffed. "They always look so smart in their suits," she said. This rather misunderstood role, which was to be working in the food hall in the M&S store in Croydon. It was a Saturday job rather than the start of a promising career in retail management. But the underlying sentiment still held true, and the experience afforded insight into some of the company's defining features.

One of these was the powerful staff culture. The company was, for many people, their whole life. They ate together in the staff canteen, paying 20p for a three-course lunch. They socialised and played football together. Romances blossomed and staff often married fellow employees. Many stayed for their entire working lives, sensing that they could never go anywhere better.

Another striking feature of the company was the air of certainty and confidence. There was an "M&S way" of doing things and an unshakeable faith that it was the right way. The mighty Marks & Sparks was the king of the high street and its position seemed impregnable.

More recently that crown has been slipping. In November, the group reported a sharp fall in profits and spoke of a "bloodbath" on the high street. What followed was an unseemly and ultimately bloody boardroom battle over who should succeed the combative Sir Richard Greenbury as chief executive.

In the end Peter Salisbury, a quietly spoken Arsenal supporter, won through, having spent his entire working life at the company. But his rival for the top job, Keith Oates, was forced to leave. It was

an undignified scramble, as far away from the company's culture as it is possible to imagine.

Yesterday the news got even worse. M&S issued a calamitous Christmas trading statement showing that its sales in the crucial November and December period had been "significantly lower than expected". Clothing, footwear and home furnishings had been particularly badly hit.

The result is that an "Autumn Value" and then a "Winter Value" promotional campaign has turned into the mother of all January sales, as the group slashes the prices of merchandise to shift racks of unsold goods. The financial impact is wounding. There will be a sharp fall in profits for the full year to around £625m, half those of last year, whereas City analysts had been expecting around £800m. It will be the worst profits result for almost a decade, and the company's shares have sunk to a five-year low on the stock exchange.

To try to wrench the ship back on course, Peter Salisbury yesterday announced a wide-ranging shake-up. The company is reorganising its management structure, creating a group-wide marketing department for the first time and increasing the number of sales staff to improve service. An "efficiency" programme will examine working practices in the group. There are sure to be job losses, almost anathema to the M&S mindset, whereby staff have traditionally felt they have a job for life.

For a company such as Marks & Spencer, these problems are without precedent. This is a business bred on success. Suddenly, after decades, there are signs of falter all around. The management is not used to such situations.

Mr Salisbury was realistic yesterday about the job in hand. "These are poor figures and highlight the scale of the task facing us - but no one should doubt the importance of these changes or our commitment to deliver them. It is a good start."

But how could this happen to the mighty M&S?

Has the store that still supplies 40 per cent of the nation's underwear and holds half the market in ready-made meals lost its touch? Or is this a temporary blip in this group's otherwise regal progress?

First, the problems. As usual with most corporate mishaps, there are several factors behind the slide. Just over a year ago M&S embarked on the biggest expansion in the group's history, with a £2bn programme to add a huge amount of new floor space. It bought 19 stores from Littlewoods in the UK, while overseas it planned assaults in Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, this coincided with a downturn in consumer spending at home, while the previously booming Asian economies plunged into crisis.

M&S has since reined in its expansion plans, but the disruption caused by integrating the Littlewoods stores has been greater than expected. "People don't

want to shop in a place with partitions up... They go somewhere else," one retail analyst said.

The company's famous "Buy British" policy has also turned against it. M&S still buys around 70 per cent of its goods in the UK. But as the Asian crisis hit textile supply centres in Hong Kong and Taiwan, rivals that were buying more of their goods in these cheap markets could price their goods more cheaply. Suddenly M&S garments looked expensive.

Another problem is its range of merchandise. M&S has never been at the cutting edge of fashion, but critics say that certain ranges began to look a bit frumpy last year. One colleague who visited the Brighton store last summer commented: "They had loads of unsightly, industrial racking filled with stuff available in all sizes at cut prices. But it was so vile you wouldn't have wanted to buy any of it anyway."

There have been problems on availability, too. On

a visit to the Croydon store in early December, it proved impossible to find four items in the colour or size required. That was £100 of lost sales from one customer in a single store, at a time when stocks should have been at their maximum.

Staff morale, too, has not been quite what you would expect. Requests for assistance in Croydon were met by a frustrated tirade about how messy the store had become and how the management didn't seem to know what they were doing. Friends have seen staff openly berating colleagues in front of customers. These are small signs and possibly not a reflection of the wider business. But they could be a symptom of a company in trouble.

M&S has also been too bureaucratic. It has layers and layers of management, and decisions are made through a tortuous process of committees. Part of Salisbury's grand plan is to slim the structure down and make the company more responsive to customers' needs.

Another significant factor is the huge increase in competition. As recently as the early Nineties, Next was almost bust, Gap had barely arrived and Debenhams was not firing on all cylinders. Now all those three have succeeded in eating away at Marks's market share. As Richard Hyman, head of Verdict, the retail consultant, says: "M&S has lost its way a bit. Next and Debenhams have caught them up in the last three or four years. M&S has also lost its edge, both in fashionability and value for money."

The problems are not restricted to clothing. In foods, M&S pioneered ready-made meals, such as fancy individual gooseberry fools selling at a huge mark-up. Then everyone else, from Sainsbury's to Sainsbury's, copied them. The gap has narrowed.

But, Mr Hyman adds, none of these problems is insurmountable. The company does not need reinvention, just a bit of fine-tuning, he says.

Fashion experts point out that M&S was in fact one of the first to employ top designers on its cloth-

ing - people such as Paul Smith and Betty Jackson helped on styling, but M&S did not promote their involvement sufficiently. Rivals such as Debenhams have since copied the strategy, with exclusive designs from the likes of Jasper Conran. But they shout their designer credentials from the rooftops. M&S's rivals' promotional displays are often better, too. While Debenhams presents its designer collections in separate, distinct areas of the shop floor, Marks & Spencer often has an elegantly styled suit right next to the comfy cardies.

But for all the obvious problems M&S faces today, its solutions are equally apparent. The smart money is not on a continued decline in fortunes at M&S but on a retail renaissance - though that may take time. The company has taken the first step towards redemption by recognising its mistakes and tackling them. Its new chief executive's future career depends on his restoring M&S to its hitherto pre-eminent position.

It would also be wise to remember the company's enormous strengths. This is an organisation that, for all its difficulties, still had group sales of £8bn last year and will make profits of more than £600m this year. It still holds a colossal 19 per cent of the women's clothing market, miles ahead of its nearest competitor. It is still number one in knickers and socks as well as in chilled foods. And where else can customers return unwanted purchases even if they have lost the receipt? What other high-street brand engenders such trust?

According to company spokesmen, things could start to look up quite soon. Spring fashion ranges will hit the stores within the next few weeks. It would be very foolish to write Marks & Spencer off. As Richard Hyman of Verdict puts it: "I am certain we are not looking at the demise of M&S. That would be ludicrous. I fully expect the company to be firing on all cylinders by this time next year."

My mum, for one, will be pleased.

BY NIGEL COPE

want to shop in a place with partitions up... They go somewhere else," one retail analyst said.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Work and the family

Sir: Deborah Orr ("Welcome to a two-tier society", 13 January) rightly identifies the macho culture of presentism as an impediment to genuine equality at the workplace and in wider society. Many women want to work flexibly once they have started a family. Enlightened employers are happy for them to do so, whether on a job share or some other basis.

Employers wedded to full-time work can be forced to think otherwise, but only through the tortuous route of indirect sex discrimination claims. To succeed a woman must prove to the satisfaction of an employment tribunal that she "could not comply" with her employer's insistence on full-time work. Usually the claim is only brought once the woman has been forced to resign in order to deal with her childcare commitments.

The Government has an opportunity to rectify this situation in the Fairness at Work Bill, shortly to begin its parliamentary passage. A chapter in that Bill on family-friendly working will contain some improvements to maternity and paternal leave arrangements. If the Government is really serious about making work more family-friendly, it should include a positive right for all workers to work flexibly, subject only to proof by the employer that the job must for good business reasons be performed full-time.

NICK ROSE
London NW5

Sir: Three things are stopping us moving to a sub-40-hour working week.

First, it remains cheaper to employ a few people for many hours rather than many people for a few hours, not just until the employees are occasionally absent or exhausted, but until they are severely debilitated.

Second, managers have no incentive to consider the effects of their decisions on society as a whole; indeed, those who persist in considering such things rarely achieve influence and may be lucky to stay in work.

Third, for every worker who has something else to do, there is usually another, either single or divorced, who does not, and such employees will remain good for profits for as long as the NHS pays for their physical and psychological repair. Employers' practices will only veer towards Deborah Orr's ideal if corporations are forced to pay all those charges themselves.

The entry of middle-class women with high-earning partners into the job market has raised housing costs in the South-east beyond the means of most ordinary people who want to give time to their children; it has shunted about a million men into more or less permanent unemployment, where they are marginally maintained by the state; and it has raised the age at which young people can become independent and start their own families. Small wonder that people marry later or that the middle-class birth-rate is declining.

A middle-class woman with a high-earning partner may have a "right to work", but, until full employment returns, high-earning couples living at the same address, with or without children, should be taxed on the full costs of enforcing that right against society as a whole.

HEON STEVENSON
Centre for Legal Studies
University of Sussex
Brighton

Sir: I was interested to read your leading article entitled "The social costs and personal benefits of working on holidays" (4 January). The Government believes that the right to time off is a vitally important one. That is why we made it a manifesto commitment to implement the Working Time Directive, one of our pledges that we have now met.

Workers should have protection from being made to work long hours. We recognise that flexibility is necessary,

allowing those who want to work longer the choice to do so. But it is necessary to establish fair minimum standards in order to protect the most vulnerable.

This supports the Government's wider goal of promoting family-friendly employment. Combining paid work and parenting, or caring for dependants, is hard work. Working parents need as much support as possible. The long hours culture has historically not only created barriers to work for women, but has also prevented many men from taking an active role in their children's upbringing.

Providing limits on working hours, minimum rest periods from work and an entitlement to paid annual leave will help working parents to spend more time with their children and so balance their home and work commitments more successfully.

IAN MCCARTNEY
Minister of State
Department of Trade and Industry
London SW1

Taking liberties

Sir: If Ken Livingstone (Comment, 13 January) wishes to accuse Philip Gould of "a complete ignorance of British history" he should brush up on his own history first.

Arguing that the Liberals were in decline from the 1850s, and seeing the 1886 split as sealing the party's fate, reckons without the landslide of 1906, and the radical government it ushered in. True, there was a dramatic split in 1886, but the party recovered completely.

It is an oversimplification to say that the Liberals were a party of classical *laissez-faire* capitalism. Again, Ken Livingstone overlooks the party's reforms from 1906 on issues such as pensions, which most historians agree amounted to the foundation of the welfare state. Later, in 1928 it was not *laissez-faire* capitalism but creative government action in areas such

as public works that Lloyd George promoted in an attempt to conquer unemployment.

Dr RICHARD GRAYSON
Director
Centre for Reform
London, SW1

Abused children

Sir: Hadn't someone better explain to Yasmin Alibhai-Brown ("Why do we still ignore the screams of abused children?", 8 January) that the age of deference is over - whether for hereditary peers or social workers?

Yes, certainly some children get abused at home, but we are sadly finding out they are just as likely to be abused in care. Even if they are being abused, calling in the social services may well only transfer them from the frying-pan to the fire. If they aren't, the horrific consequences of a false accusation hardly bear thinking about.

Why do you think the public have been so reluctant to help the authorities catch Jeff and Jenny Bramley? It is because they haven't seen the evidence, and (at least) until they do they are just going to assume that the authorities have got it wrong again. Ms Alibhai-Brown is asking us to take it on faith that the social workers know what they are doing. In your dreams, ma'am!

MICHAEL W STONE
Peterborough

Sir: Prue Skinner (letter, 14 January) might be interested to know that immobilising breathalysers have been tried out in New Zealand. Successful? Not really, humans being what they are. Delinquent drivers usually got their passengers - or even passengers by - to blow on their behalf.

JD SLOAN
Pulborough, West Sussex

Sir: Matt Cavanagh attributes Tony Blair's habit of stating everything in threes to

January). The evidence for this is patchy, and where such "convergence" may be happening it is still wholly inadequate for the UK to accommodate the "one size fits all" monetary policy that comes with the single currency.

Even on the quite inadequate criteria of inflation rates and interest rates we have not converged.

Of course, inflation rates are falling towards EU levels but they are still higher. And, of course, UK interest rates have fallen, but at 6 per cent they are still well above Euroland's and any precipitate fall towards 3 per cent would surely trigger inflation in the labour and housing markets.

But these criteria do not get to the heart of real cyclical convergence.

On any measure of capacity utilisation (whether it is, for example, unemployment for structural differences between the British economy and those of its EU partners) Britain shows no signs of moving into line with the core European economies.

Our business cycle is stubbornly transatlantic rather than continental. There remain fundamental structural differences (for example, more divergent trade patterns and a greater sensitivity to changes in short-term interest rates) which - even if we were ever to get into "sync" with core

Out of step with EU

Sir: I read with concern the claim made in Gordon Brown's document to the European Commission that the traditional differences between the British economy and those of its EU partners "are becoming less distinct over time" ("Brown spells out plans to join euro", 13

IN BRIEF

religiosity (letter, 13 January). Is it not more likely that he is modelling himself on the Bellman, the leader of those hunting the Snark? He told his men: "What I tell you three times is true." His map was one the crew could understand, for it was "the best - a perfect and absolute blank". Sounds like New Labour philosophy to me.

KIRSTEN ELLIOTT
Bath

Sir: Lawrence Roberts is missing the point: the Robin Cook saga and the relevance of the private lives of public personalities is not about drink, sex or even drugs (letter, 14 January). The issue is about betrayal of trust, deceit and concealment, traits undesirable in any person. We teach our children not to lie because it is habit-forming.

HUSSAIN RUSTAM
New Malden,
Surrey

Europe - would effectively torpedo any hopes of sustained cyclical convergence.

RUTH LEA
Head of Policy Unit
Institute of Directors
London SW1

Teenage vote-loser

Sir: I was astounded to read your article regarding the possibility of teenagers being enfranchised at the age of 16 ("Vote at 16 to be considered by Ministers", 31 December).

Although at this age one is legally entitled to leave school, get married, have a child and die for one's country, one still needs parental consent to marry - thus proving that one is still not altogether autonomous. I am sure that there must be many more 16- than 18-year-olds who still live at home and rely on their parents' financial support. I think that these two vital years do make an immense difference in developing one's opinions and ideas.

If adolescents were granted the right to vote at 16 the vast majority might do so, but not necessarily for the right reasons. The bulk of 16-year-olds haven't a clue what they really want from a government and therefore would just vote as their parents do. Others might cast their vote in the opposite direction merely to be antagonistic. Many teenagers would say that it didn't matter who they voted for, as it was simply one vote. As there are 1.5 million 16- and 17-year-olds this could make a considerable difference to the outcome of an election.

I also cannot fully comprehend why the Government has been considering changing the legislation as there has been no apparent demand from teenagers.

Despite the fact that I am 13 and have very definite views on many subjects, I would prefer to wait until I am 18 and will be more mature and the issues will have more relevance to me.

CHARLOTTE CASSIS
London SW11

Our outdated Army

Sir: I fully support Major Joyce's views regarding the Army's antiquated and "classist" commissioning policy, which has led to him being told to resign or be sacked ("Defiant Major is told to quit", 14 January).

Why else during a recent Army Commissioning Board was I required to disclose my "military connections" and whether I went to a private school and also list the occupations of my family members?

I am sure that many people considering an Army career are deterred by an institution that appears content to portray itself as discriminatory and outdated. Sacking Major Joyce for speaking out against the Army will only serve to reinforce such views among the public.

Is it any wonder that the Army is experiencing a recruitment crisis?

PETER WOOD
Heistoy, Cheshire

Hunt the 'nutter'

Sir: Your report of the study by Taylor and Gunn (6 January) shatters the myth that more people are dying at the hands of people identified as mentally ill. According to Home Office figures, the absolute number of such homicides fell between 1987 and 1995.

So much for the simplistic soundbite "community care has failed", and the clamour for ever more confinement and coercion which appears to have overwhelmed the Government - which has put public safety before care in relation to mental health priorities.

Another study might be interesting, namely of the *Grand* over time of the amount of publicity given to each of these sad deaths. I suspect this would find an astonishing rise over the last 10 years or so - but why? A homicide in the 1960s was no less horrible than one in the 1990s.

I suggest the answer is simple: good old-fashioned bigotry. Pressure groups campaigning about homicides by people with mental health problems are given hearing because we want to hear them, because in the last few decades the "mentally ill" have "moved out into the community" (that is, former detainees have begun to be acknowledged as equal citizens).

In past centuries we had witches, Jews or blacks for officialdom to scapegoat. Is it now the turn of "nutters" and "psychos"?

Dr STEPHEN HOPKES
Consultant in General Psychiatry
Shipley, West Yorkshire

Millennium misery

Sir: In the panic about the "millennium (Y2K) bug", it seems we may be building up even bigger problems for ourselves in the future.

Back in the 1960s, apparently, programmers took a short cut, indicating dates with just the last two digits, thus creating problems for the year 2000. They presumably thought that by now all their systems would be obsolete.

However, if we now successfully convert everything to four figures, we will have an even bigger problem in 8,000 years' time, at the turn of 9999. The next year will be 10000.

By that time, the four-figure system will have been embedded in everything for 8,000 years. If we go back to the earliest neolithic times and the fragmentary traces, in a few places, of something akin to civilisation, and before the beginning of writing.

The Y2K bug, by then embedded in chips almost twice as old as the pyramids, are now, will be vastly more difficult to sort out. They certainly won't be able to find the original programmers.

Please, therefore, let us go to five digits, now. I would imagine that by 9999 - in 98,000 years' time, if we are still here, we should have managed to upgrade all the chips from the first 10 millennia.

Dr CHRIS BELLAMY
London W3

Transsexual Italian waiters approaching from the right

FROM TIME to time I get worried letters from readers who don't know anywhere else to turn to find out about etiquette. And indeed it must be very confusing if, for example, you have lived all your life in somewhere backward and provincial like London and you suddenly come into society and don't know how to behave, so today I am dealing as best I can with some of your more anguished enquiries.

What should I do at a party if I am trapped with a man who has a compulsion to talk about those dreary things that men always talk about, such as cars or politics or sport or the new sitcom on television? How do you get away from a man like that without offending him, or, at least, without him following you?

Can I deduce from this that you are a woman?

No, I am in fact a man at the moment, but I am due soon to have the operation which will turn me into the woman I feel I really have been all along, and which will give me not just a woman's body but a blessed freedom from conversation about cars, politics, sport, etc.

Well, there's your answer! To get away from any man in a hurry, all you have to do is go into some details about the sex change operation you are about to have! That should get rid of him!

That's all very well, but very many of us find ourselves longing to get away from someone at a party who is boring us to death and have no intention of changing sex in the near future. What

do you recommend to us normal ones?

Well, I should pretend that... And don't tell me to pretend that I am going to have a sex change operation and ask me to go into detail about it!

Oh, Ah... well, in that case, I should tell the person you are trapped with at the party that you take feng shui very seriously and that you realise you should be standing somewhere else in the room for fear of damaging your health, then move there as soon as you have said it.

When you sit down at a table in a smart restaurant, why does the waiter immediately remove the empty plate at your place?

To see if there is a tip underneath it.



MILES KINGDON

Today I am dealing as best I can with some of your more anguished enquiries about etiquette

rant table with an empty plate in front of me, am I meant to leave a tip before the meal starts?

Certainly not. But you can always have a look to see if the previous diners have left something.

When you are out driving and you come to a roundabout, you're meant to give way to a car already on the roundabout. But what happens if a vehicle comes to the roundabout on EVERY occasion at EXACTLY the same time? And then everyone stops and waits for someone else to make the first move? Who has precedence then?

The person with the most expensive car. Failing that, the person with the oldest car registration number. Failing that, the car with the biggest driver. Failing that, the driver who has most recently had a sex change operation. Failing that...

OK, OK, we get the point. But

what happens if, when you're going round a roundabout, you accidentally miss your exit road and then have to go round again? And on your second time round you come to a car which was waiting to come on the roundabout the first time round? Do you still get precedence over that car the second time round? Or does precedence only count once? And if it counts twice, would it count a third time round?

May I ask if you are a woman driver?

What has that got to do with it, may I ask?

Nothing. I am just trying to be annoying.

Nothing of the sort. I am having a hernia operation.

Then you shouldn't be driving. Can you perhaps help me? I am an Italian waiter who is saving up to have a sex change operation, and one way I can save money is to take plates away at the beginning of the meal in the restaurant and keep them so I can sell them later to make a little money. Well, the other day I was driving to the place where they buy and sell restaurant equipment with all these plates on the back seat of my car, when I came to a roundabout and I knew that if I stopped suddenly I might break all the plates, so although it was not my right of way...

I'm sorry. That's all we have space for. Some other time perhaps.

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The national tragedy behind the poignant tale of the Bramleys

THE STORY of Jeff and Jennifer Bramley, who ran away with their foster-children Jade and Hannah, is disturbing. Not simply because two parents should feel so desperate that they have to disappear in order to keep the children they love, but because the prevalent assumption throughout the nation is that the Bramleys must be right and Cambridgeshire social services must be wrong.

It has come to something when the reputation of one of the agencies of the state that touches so directly and intimately on people's lives has fallen so low that it is regarded with universal suspicion.

Politicians – and leader-writers, for that matter – like to talk about freedom and justice as sweeping expanses of abstract principle. But this is what freedom is about in real life. If ordinary people live in fear of social services, not because they have done anything wrong but simply because they feel powerless in the face of what seems to them to be an arbitrary bureaucracy, that is a cancer at the heart of our democracy.

It should be stressed that we do not know why it was decided that the Bramleys were not fit to adopt the five- and three-year-old half-sisters whom they had been fostering since last March. It may be that there are other facts that are more convincing than the feeble stuff offered so far about lacking the "special parenting skills" the children need – facts that are being kept secret, quite rightly from the point of view of the children's privacy. But certainly, if the account given by the Bramleys in their open letter this week is true, they, as prospective adoptive parents, have not been given satisfactory reasons for Cambridgeshire Social Services' change of mind.

What is more frightening is that the couple seem to have sought legal redress against the council only to fall foul of procedural red tape – or should that be pink legal ribbon? – which would not allow the courts to consider the children's interest.

In law, the rights of prospective adoptive parents are too limited – and, especially in cases where an authority changes its mind, the burden of proof should be reversed. In any case, it should not be necessary for people to go to law to achieve swift and effective remedy against social services when things go wrong; there should be some method of appealing to an independent body before resorting to law.

Frank Dobson should intervene, not just to ensure that justice is both done and seen to be done in the Bramleys' case, but to try to restore public confidence in social services generally. As long as the social services appear to wield unaccountable power, too many people will feel they live in the repressive shadow of the "family police", which is a terrible state for a free country to be in.



A missed opportunity to flex some muscles

THE EUROPEAN Parliament has missed a historic opportunity to come of age. In calling off their attack on the European Commission, Euro MPs did more than just let Jacques Santer and his colleagues off the hook, lamentable though that may be. The failure was of far greater significance. It has shown that the European Parliament is not ready to act as a proper parliament.

Once upon a time the European Parliament was, in fact, supposed to be weak, a mere talking shop. Only in 1979, with direct elections, did it change its name from the European Assembly. But effective parliaments are about more than being directly elected. They have to take on the executive. Of course they should be granted statutory powers,

as the European Parliament has been. But it has to use its powers. What we have witnessed is the parliament refusing to seize even part of the territory that marks out the authority of a real parliament – scrutiny of the executive and the power of the purse. The fraud issue was an ideal opportunity to assert the control over both.

Of course, to have pressed the "nuclear button" and dismissed the entire commission would have caused chaos. But, in the sweep of history, it would have been well worth it. From the struggle between English monarchs and parliamentarians in the 17th century to the current tussle between the American congress and President Clinton, parliaments have to cause trouble if they are doing their job. At the same time that M Santer made a fool of the European Parliament, Tony Blair was being grilled by the Opposition in the Commons. Until the European Parliament starts to throw its weight around, it will not gain the legitimacy that it so craves.

A picture of wealth

THE QUEEN got herself into a spot of public-relations bother a few years ago when a louche Sunday newspaper insisted on calling her "the world's richest woman". A pained Palace spokesman pointed out that this valuation included the royal art collection, which could not be regarded as the Queen's personal property since it belonged to the nation. Well, you could have fooled us.

Yesterday, plans were unveiled for a new art gallery at Buckingham Palace so that we, her subjects, can see some of the 9,000 pictures she has in her various attics. Except that we will have to pay for the privilege of seeing our own pictures. At a time when the Government is trying to reverse the trend towards charging for museums and art galleries, the Queen's new spin doctorate has missed a chance to win friends by opening the doors for free.

Mr Portillo is everywhere – except in the one place he wants to be

MICHAEL PORTILLO has been everywhere this week. On Tuesday night, on BBC2, he was touring Spain exuding his new-look, intelligent charm. Last night you may have caught him on BBC1's *Question Time*. In between, he has been presenting Channel 4's *Powerhouse*, its thrice-weekly political programme. In the space of four days, prominent appearances on three terrestrial channels out of five is good going. It makes those other Tory exiles, Edwina Currie and David Mellor, seem shy and retiring.

There is, though, a big difference between Portillo and the other politicians-turned-media personalities. Mellor and co thrive on their new lives in the spotlight. They have become broadcasters, and are probably treated with greater respect and awe as media celebrities than they ever were as politicians.

This is not the attitude of Portillo. Although he is pretty good in front of the cameras, he does not see performing on television as his vocation. In contrast to the others, he performs for reasons of expediency. It keeps him in the public eye and helps to pay the bills. What is more, the broad media exposure permits the cultivation of a more rounded, softer image. But Portillo's ubiquity is all a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

Briefly, I had first-hand experience of this interim phase in the Portillo career, appearing as one of his guests on the *Powerhouse* programme. It was curious watching him, in another item on the programme, as the neutral interviewer of a discussion on

Europe, challenging the Conservative backbencher John Bercow about his Euroscepticism. Most revealingly, though, at the end of the programme Portillo did not seem to have the adrenaline racing around him which most presenters have after navigating their way through half an hour of live television. Probably he was thinking: "What am I doing here interviewing a couple of insignificant journalists?"

As the closing signature tune played, he put it more politely by observing to myself and Peter Hitchens of *The Express*: "Politics is a strange world." I asked him the predictable question about whether he found it easier being on the other side of the microphone. Instead of answering directly he compared the interviewer's art with performing in the Commons. "Presenting is difficult because so much is going on at the same time. But then I guess you would find speaking at the Dispatch Box very nerve-racking. It depends on what you are used to. Mind you, it is impossible ever to be entirely relaxed about performing on the front bench. The eerie silence of your own back benches in moments of difficulty is a real challenge." Here was someone in the midst of a week of television exposure that many politicians would die for, reflecting within seconds of a live performance on the different arena of the Commons. He wants to get back there, and I suspect that he would like to get back there soon.

This is not just "little-tattle" to complement New Labour's soap opera of recent weeks. It matters. In the choreography of Conservative



STEVE RICHARDS
He has the same gift Tony Blair had in opposition; he can make the vacuous appear deeply serious

politics between now and the election, the position of Portillo is highly significant. For even outside the Commons, Portillo is seen as a credible, charismatic rival to William Hague. Inside the Commons, the breathing down Hague's neck would get much heavier. In terms of the dynamics of the Tory party it is highly significant, too. Hague's only credible rival is from the right, limiting his room for manoeuvre on the wider political spectrum.

In a way that is unfair to both of them, Hague has already suffered from the "Portillo effect", an inevitable consequence of a leader with a low poll-rating and a charismatic figure on the sidelines. For a Channel 4 series Portillo presented last September (Channel 4 seems to be intent on rehabilitating the great man single-

handedly), Hague was interviewed in what appeared to be a scene from *Monty Python*. The interview looked as though it was taking place on an isolated, windswept moor. At any moment it seemed as though John Cleese would appear, to announce: "And now for something completely different."

As the gales of wind swept around them, Portillo asked, in effect, why so many people had concluded that Hague was not up to the job. Afterwards, many articles were written on Portillo's cheek in humiliating his leader in such an overt fashion. In fact a producer on the programme tells me that it was Hague's adviser who suggested the unflattering location and that Portillo did not want to ask the embarrassing questions. No matter, as with his Messiah-like appearances at the fringes of the party conference, in which he stressed the importance of loyalty, every Portillo move will be judged as preliminary stages in his bid for the leadership.

More importantly, Portillo's looming presence hems Hague in. In fact he bet that every move he makes is calculated partly to keep Portillo at bay. That means that even if he were to wake up in the middle of the night and decide on a move towards the centre ground, he would not be able to make it. In opposition, where symbolism is more important than policy-making, a return to the shadow cabinet of Ken Clarke would boost the Tories at the polls more than anything Clarke has said or done as leader. Clarke has said he would be happy to return before the election. But what would Hague have to do or say to bring

about such an important moment? And what "clear blue water" would arise between himself and Portillo as a result? It will not happen.

Instead Hague will promote the "British Way" in the coming weeks as relentlessly as Blair presents his Third Way. To put it politely, both Ways have a certain ideological flexibility. For example, Hague will soon drop the idea he provocatively floated in his party conference speech, of an English parliament. But the British Way suggests an embrace of tradition and an opposition to change, most specifically within Europe, which is unlikely to reassure the centrists in the party.

It will be very much to Portillo's liking, though. Indeed, if Portillo had invented it, the *Times* and *Telegraph* would have heralded the British Way as a profound new philosophy. Every time Portillo made a banal speech in the mid-Nineties on public spending or poorly qualified foreigners, the right-wing broadsheets knelt at the altar and christened him the new "philosopher king". Portillo has the same gift Tony Blair had in opposition. He can make the vacuous appear deeply serious. In opposition, though not in government, this is a great gift. Tory voters, looking at those grim opinion polls, will be aware of it.

So will William Hague, struggling still to get a sympathetic press. He knows that while Portillo may seem to have been everywhere this week, he has in reality been everywhere except where he really wants to be.

Steve Richards is political editor of the *New Statesman*

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I am a victim of my own spin."
Charlie Wheelan,
former Treasury press secretary

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Man is the only animal that can remain on friendly terms with the victims he intends to eat until he eats them."
Samuel Butler,
British writer.

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MICHAEL'S TRYING to do what most of us, untouched by a divine talent, could never contemplate: he's trying to quit with his illusion of immortality intact. That feared defeat, that unwanted ending, that sad last act, is a vital part of the narrative line we all live through our whole lives. We get to the end of things and we stick around for whatever is next. But that next story doesn't begin until you have an ending, a denoue-

ment, for the first. Michael is lopping off his tale's conclusion. *Salon Magazine*

A BALLPLAYER, unlike an artist, cannot continue refining his art until the end of his life, and Jordan knew when the time had come to recognize that he had written the right ending for his career. He is going out at the top of his game, a champion who has nothing left to prove. *Boston Globe*

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
US comment on the retirement of the basketball star Michael Jordan

HE IS arguably the world's most famous person, and not only famous but admired – a figure whose selling power extends far beyond sports. But his decision to leave the Chicago

Bulls, who have pretty much owned the NBA championship in this decade, hardly came as a surprise. He'd said he didn't wish to play for any coach other than Phil Jackson, who

has left the Bulls. And he can afford (at well over \$70 million a year in salary and endorsements, boy, can he afford) to leave while still on top, making a dignified exit. *The Washington Post*

THERE ARE no other Michael Jordans. This is an athlete whose thoughtful approach to fame offers the best guidance on what professional sports in general ought to be looking for. As Jordan so aptly demon-

strated again Wednesday, the many aspirants to the throne of "His Airness" need to understand that it takes more than slam dunks to inspire lasting fan loyalty and admiration. *LA Times*

JORDAN BECAME a potent symbol of sports merchandising. He rescued pro basketball from the doldrums and came to symbolize American culture that endures the world. *San Francisco Chronicle*

PANDORA

NOT EVERYONE was thrilled to read *The Mirror's* sprightly interview with Charlie Whelan yesterday morning. Pandora was aboard the Docklands Light Railway approaching Canary Wharf, home of *The Independent* and other newspapers, when a hack sitting nearby answered his frantically ringing mobile phone. It was clear that the caller – whose name appeared to be “Dominic” – was in a distressed state. The hack on the train did his best to mollify him, finally raising his voice to say, “What Charlie said last Sunday was that if he did give an interview, it would be to us.” At that point, the caller abruptly broke off communications. Soon the train reached the Wharf and the doleful-looking hack strode off reluctantly in the direction of the Telegraph group.

TONY BLAIR makes his third visit to Wales as Prime Minister today. His last visit was to Cardiff to meet Nelson Mandela, but this time he's going to North Wales where he will attend a Labour Party Q & A session in the Shire Hall at Mold. No doubt a prime reason for the journey is to support Alun Michael in his bid to become head of the Welsh Labour Party, in effect the first prime minister of Wales once devolution is complete. It's no coincidence that the powerful AEEU engineering union is holding a conference in the region on Saturday to decide whom they'll support for the job.

A FRIEND of Pandora's was treated to an “amusing” autobiographical anecdote by the author Salman Rushdie recently. Rushdie described a restaurant dinner he enjoyed with a group of friends in New York last autumn. At some point in the meal, the group noticed that the plump, infamous Monica Lewinsky was seated at a nearby table. Rushdie and his friends were overcome with mirth. Embarrassed and hurt, Monica turned to the group and asked whether they found something amusing. “Yes, yes, we do,” they replied. Surely Mr Rushdie was not making fun of another person's public persecution?

POOR HILLARY Clinton. She's had to cope with years of ferocious Whitewater investigation and years of Bubba Bill's lawdly philandering. Now the First Lady has got a worse nightmare on her hands: the biographer Kitty Kelley is said to be preparing to write

a book on Hillary, who already has the former Watergate investigative ace Carl Bernstein penning one about her. Kelley's past targets include Frank Sinatra, Nancy Reagan and our own royal family – a book that was published in the US by Simon & Schuster. According to one source, however, Simon & Schuster are not thrilled by the idea of a Kelley hatchet job on Mrs Clinton. Apparently they are keen to publish the enormously popular Hillary's autobiography.

AS THE haute couture fashion shows open this weekend in Paris, all eyes are on the supermodel Kate Moss, who recently spent several weeks convalescing in a London clinic after “too many parties”. It's Kate's 25th birthday and, according to one report, she will be the guest of honour at a Saturday-night party thrown by Donatella Versace in a Paris disco. According to another account, however, she is going off to Morocco to celebrate with her close friend Tinka Cordell, the handsome, wealthy son of the late music whiz Danny Cordell. There is also a chance she may meet up with her old flame Johnny Depp, who reportedly sent her a new BMW while she was in hospital. Pandora hopes that, however she decides to commemorate her quarter-century, Kate won't be put in a position where Tarka and Depp come face to face; last year a jealous Depp vowed to wreak a fierce revenge on Tarka if he should learn that Kate and he were anything more than good friends.

IT'S BEING hyped in the States as her “first-ever live television interview” but when Madonna (pictured) goes on CNN's *Larry King Live* programme on Monday evening, British viewers may just yawn. The fact is that Ruby Wax's in-your-face bedroom interview with Madonna, broadcast back in 1997, was as lively a view of the star as anyone could ever wish for – and far more entertaining than anything that the smug, craggy-faced Larry King is likely to produce.



You can judge a book by its cover



PHILIP HENSHER

You don't catch Saul Bellow cosily telling you about his hobbies on the dustjacket

wife Phyllis, a physician. They have three daughters.

This perfectly genuine example of a terrible author biography turned up this week on the back of a new book. Above it is an unmissable photograph of Mr Bessette – he is shown wearing a dinner jacket in a multi-storey car park. The more you contemplate the author biography, the more pleasures it begins

to yield. I don't want to make fun of Wayne State University and the Detroit College of Law – no doubt both excellent institutions – but you do start to wonder what led an author to share with his readers his qualifications, his wife Phyllis's job, his interest in weightlifting and wine and his address. I expect it is an attempt to get the readers and reviewers on his side; just as hostages in war zones are always advised to start telling their kidnappers about their families to make themselves seem human, so the critics will be less inclined to be rude about a book if they know that the author has three enormous daughters and a wife, Phyllis, a physician, all eating their heads off in Grosse Pointe Park, wherever that may be. The book, incidentally, is a life of the writer Mario Lanza, and a tenth as interesting as Mr Bessette's biographical sketch.

The golden rule is that the smarter the author, the more austere the biography. You don't catch Saul Bellow cosily telling you about his hobbies on the dustjacket. And, as authors rise up the scale of esteem, the biographies tend to

become briefer. Martin Amis used to chat cosily about his double first and being educated at “a series of crammers”; these days, however, it is as stark as Thomas Fynchon's and merely says: “Martin Amis is the author of nine novels, two collections of stories and three works of non-fiction. He lives in London.” Come on, this says; I don't need to tell you who I am. There's nowhere much to go from here; perhaps “Martin Amis is a novelist” or even “Martin Amis exists”.

I can't help rather regretting this tendency, which has spread down the scale so that even comic novelists just tell you the names of their previous novels, any prizes, and the county they live in. The appallingly fascinating way they once habitually referred to themselves by their first name and infallibly listed every previous job, from arms dealer to usherette, used to be a great source of pleasure, a constant restful temptation when the novel itself grew tedious.

It was once a useful litmus test; if the author biography turned out to be significantly more interesting than the novel, then the reader

might as well give up immediately. But now you have to rely on other tests, and it is not often that a dedication or a copyright page will tempt a flagging reader.

So when an old-fashioned terrible biography turns up, let's enjoy it while we can. A superb example arrived last year with a comic novel about holiday reps in Ibiza. The novel itself was an utter nullity, but the biography was a joy. “Colin is a direct descendant of the Russian Royal Family... selected by Nasa in 1984 to join their space programme. Six months into training it was discovered that he suffered from horizontal vertigo... spent a number of years working with dolphins. He specialised in monitoring the emotional stress and psychological traumas that these mammals undergo... Since the closure of Windsor Safari Park, Colin has divided his time between Formula Two race driving and lollipop man duties near a school in Peckham.”

Colin may not be up to much as a novelist, but one thing is clear: for the specialised and exquisite genre of the author biography, this man has a perfect talent.

The warning lights flashing along Main Street, USA

JEAN BAUDRILLARD, the French intellectual, does not leap to mind for his financial punditry. But lately, his claim that financial capital has entered the realm of “hyper-reality”, that it whirrs chaotically around the globe having next to no impact on our real-life economies, has gained some resonance.

This week, the latest victim of the crisis that started in Asia more than a year ago has been Brazil, which unexpectedly devalued its currency on Tuesday and thereby set off a day of panic in London and New York. Yet as each wave of the financial crisis crashes over the markets, it appears to wash harmlessly over the American and British economies. While ordinary Indonesians and Brazilians certainly suffer, unprotected by the Baudrillard effect, recession on Main Street, USA remains a strangely distant threat. Although growth in the UK is slowing, here too, if there is a recession at all, it looks like being short and shallow.

The Tweedledums of punditry say it will continue to be held at bay by the fundamental vigour of the US economy which, in turn, will shelter the UK and others from the worst of the global storm. Entrepreneurship, new technology and the skill of Alan Greenspan, head of the Federal Reserve and chief economic wizard, mean that financial meltdown in far-away countries will not harm the US. The Tweedledums insist that the longer the US economy and stock-market continue to thrive on nothing more than hot air, the harder will be the inevitable crash. Each wobble on Wall Street is like that of a tightrope walker progressively losing his balance before inevitably teetering to the ground.

So, either global financial capitalism is in its death throes, or it is demonstrating its ultimate success by safeguarding from all the turmoil



DIANE COYLE

Inflation, rather than the next crash, could be the heffalump stalking the world economy

the one economy to have embraced it properly. It's a hard one to call.

So far, the key facts are on the side of the optimists. Low unemployment, low inflation, mutual fund balances boosted by high share prices – the economic measures that people really care about – have convinced US consumers that all is well. Confidence is high, so they are shopping cheerfully, buying houses, starting up companies and hiring staff if they can get them. The virtuous circle that sustains a thriving economy is intact.

And certainly there is no question that the US is out on the frontier of technological advance, with an impressive capacity to turn weightless knowledge into productivity, sales, profits, jobs and wages. There is, to some extent, a “new economy” that has not been fully measured by the old statistics. The longest expansion since the boom fuelled by the Vietnam war has also been the most stable, with seven years of steady growth and prices.

The reason why anybody is pessimistic about the future in these favourable circumstances – apart

from a natural human inclination to think that the good times cannot possibly last – rests on a series of figures that fascinate economists but mean little to anybody else. These figures can be compared to the pressure gauge on a boiler: it may not have blown up yet, but with readings like these it is only a matter of time before something blows. And the bigger the build-up of pressure, the more violent the ultimate explosion is likely to be.

There are several warning lights flashing at present. Share prices have soared so high that companies cannot possibly, it seems, deliver the profits and dividends to justify them. Ratios of share prices to expected earnings or to yields on alternative investments are at all-time records. It is, after all, two years since the revered Mr Greenspan first warned about the possible adverse effects of the “irrational exuberance” in the stockmarket.

More ominously, the US is spending well beyond its means. Household spending is higher than household income. The private savings ratio has turned negative, with the gap financed by borrowing. This borrowing is underpinned by the stock market, so if the bubble bursts it will have a knock-on effect. Calculations by Phillips & Drew, the investment managers, suggest that to keep US growth at its long-term trend rate, household borrowing – and therefore stock-market wealth – would have to increase exponentially from now on.

The excess spending is also spotlighted by a huge balance of payments deficit. High spending by US consumers and businesses is sucking in imports to keep up with the demand. To pay for the imports and finance the trade gap, the country is borrowing huge amounts of foreign capital, making what was once



Nightmare on Wall Street: traders panic Richard Drew/AP

the world's biggest owner of foreign assets its biggest debtor instead.

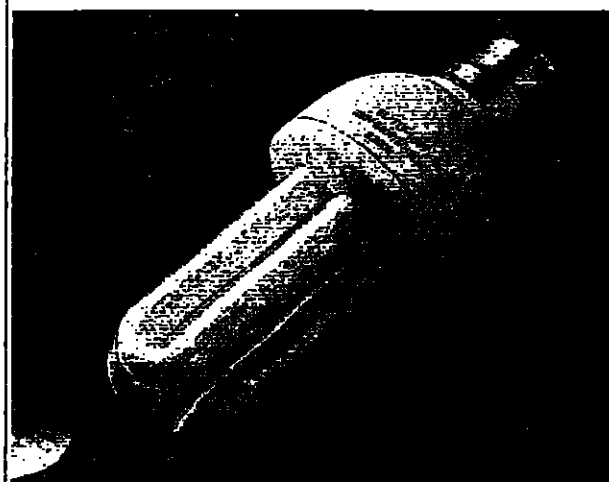
As long as Wall Street continues to rise, foreigners are happy to park their money in the US. But, once again, to anybody prone to looking on the gloomy side, a lot seems to rest on a fragile bubble of confidence. Can American shoppers, borrowing ultimately from foreign investors, sustain the whole planetary economy? Only as long as foreigners trust the Americans to carry on shopping. This all sounds a very convincing case for getting worried. The trouble is that the pessimists have cried wolf twice, not three times, but repeatedly for the past two years. Not surprisingly, they have stopped winning new converts the more the US has thrived and the deeper they have sunk into their depression.

With the financial world dividing into Tiggers and Eeyores, it is perhaps hardly surprising that stockmarkets have been so volatile. No sooner does a shock wave from Brazil or Asia give the Eeyores a chance to say “We told you so”, than

the Tiggers bounce in because they see a good opportunity to buy shares at a lower price, sending the market straight back up again.

They are probably both partly right. When financial bubbles burst, it is always pretty spectacular. A Wall Street “correction” will mean a dramatic fall in share prices. But adjustments in the real economy occur much more slowly, and often in unexpected ways. The bit that gives way under the pressure could turn out to be a surprise.

Indeed, conventional economics predicts that the result of a debt-financed spending boom and a yawning balance of payments deficit is higher inflation. This is the last thing anybody is worrying about at the moment. Yet there are early signals of it in earnings growth and the prices charged for services. After all, America has run out of workers, so wages are bound to be bid up. Inflation, rather than the next great crash and a serious depression, could turn out to be the heffalump stalking the world economy.

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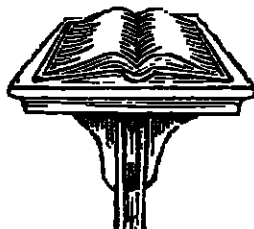
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Fox-hunting and enlightenment



PODIUM

ANDREW NORTON
From a paper presented by a Bristol University researcher to the Royal Geographical Society conference

THE PLACE of hunting in country life has become a key point of contention in political debate in recent years.

Hunting has been held by the pro-hunting lobby to be a traditional way of managing animals in the countryside that represents country life and defines the social identity of country people, delimiting the compass of the authentic rural community.

Anti-hunting campaigners are universally portrayed as “metropolitans” or “townies”, with little understanding of the countryside, while hunting is positioned so fundamentally as a rural activity that any attack on hunting is represented as an attack on the countryside as a whole.

The hunting issue has also involved the contesting of interpretations of cultural history and ideas about what constitutes human nature and social progress. Animals have provided a rich source of symbolism that has been deployed by the anti-hunting lobby to denounce the individuals who hunt as “barbaric”, animal-like or brutish.

The idea that hunting with hounds expresses the nature of the human participants, reflecting barbaric human impulses and constituting a feudal relic from the Dark Ages, has been used forcefully by the anti-hunting lobby in recent years, most recently through the “Deadline 2000” campaign of the League Against Cruel Sports.

Mike Foster, the MP who introduced the most recent private member's bill aimed at having hunting banned, argued that: “Hunting wild animals with dogs for sport is cruel and unnecessary. I think it is a barbaric practice that should have ended centuries ago with cock-fighting, bear-baiting and dog-fighting.”

Rona McDonald, a spokesperson for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, noted the timeliness of a ban on hunting: “The RSPCA has been campaigning to protect animals for 120 years. We have seen the end of badger-baiting, dog-fighting and cock-fighting.”

“Society moves on; I think that it is just a matter of time before we manage to get rid of fox-hunting and stag-hunting and things like that. The

hunters know that their time is running out.”

The idea that practices involving animals are reflective of the social or ethical progress of the human societies in which they are situated is not new. In 1509, Erasmus alluded to the irony of hunting – a practice that confers social status on participants and a practice that is degenerative of humanity by reflecting animal urges.

The pro-hunting lobby has aimed to debunk the theory of social progress articulated by the anti-hunting lobby by noting that hunting with hounds expresses an essential human nature that has been repressed by the urbanisation of society. According to this interpretation of cultural history, the urbanisation of society has increased people's distance from nature, resulting in the spread of overly sentimental and anthropomorphic environmental ethics.

Anne Mallalieu, the leader of the Labour Party's Leave Country Sports Alone group and the president of the Countryside Alliance, has argued that the closer contact with animals that participation in hunting allows enables participants to consider anti-hunting ethics and to “move on” in their thinking.

“What those who oppose hunting must understand is that they are not ahead of us in thinking or morality towards animals,” she said. “We hunters have already addressed these questions and moved on. It is they who are behind.” This argument misses the point of anti-hunting ethical

progress theory; progress depends on the extension of the circle of compassion, not merely “addressing the question”. Slave-traders could have argued much the same point as Mallalieu if “slavery”, “slaves” and “slave-traders” are substituted for “hunting”, “animals” and “hunters”.

Finally, it is interesting to note that, in associating support for hunting with country society, the pro-hunting lobby has reinforced the idea that rural society is less civilised.

The argument that opposition to hunting reflects society becoming divorced from nature fits with the account of cultural history articulated by the anti-hunting lobby because the idea that rural society is inchoate or backward is powerful.

Given this coincidence, the anti-hunting lobby could accept the pro-hunting lobby's questionable association of hunting with country life and argue that hunting should be banned as a barbaric rural pastime.

From such a perspective, urban sentimentalism could then be reconfigured as cultural enlightenment.

Don't bend to the Americans



DEBORAH ORR
Bizarrely, the banana has managed - in a modest sense - to unite the European Community

BANANA, LIGHT of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Ba-na-na: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to lap, at three, on the teeth. Ba. Na. Na. Hell, it's no good. Even Nabokov the master at wringing sympathy from the most unpromising of subjects, couldn't have lent gravitas to a discourse on the banana. When it comes to comedy fruit - and I am afraid that it has - the yellow crescent has got to be top... well, you know what.

It's hard to unpack exactly how the banana achieved its pre-eminent punning status, although obviously it's got something to do with the fruit's passing resemblance to a dysfunctional penis (demand for Viagra suggesting that this is becoming the norm) combined with the fact that there's not much else to do with it except shove it in your mouth (which goes some way to explaining Bill Clinton's interest). What use, anyway, is such idle speculation as the US and Europe square up for all-out war? Suffice to say that any European who fails to take the banana war seriously must have gone... well, you know what.

The banana war has its roots in European colonialism, with Britain, France and, to a lesser degree, Spain and Portugal supporting EU protection of bananas from their erstwhile colonies in the Caribbean, the West Indies and Africa. These bananas are small and expensive since the countries that produce them do so within small, family-run companies without using mass farming methods and without much resort to pesticides and other agrochemicals. Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, however, prefer the larger, cheaper Latin American, or dollar, banana produced under the auspices of the US multinational that have been operating ever since the US began propping up the banana republics.

There is, I feel, much to note from the fact that the banana war has been right at the heart of Europe since the single market's inception. Back in 1987 the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, held up the Treaty of Rome for three days while a protocol was added excluding the strange fruit from the single market. Eurosceptics will perhaps find odd comfort in the knowledge



The humble banana has sparked the first stand-off between the euro and the dollar

that the bloody Germans started the banana war, though Europhiles may feel it dents their dignity that there's been a comedy fruit in the wings at most of the seminal moments in the EU's history. No wonder European commissioners "slip up" so often.

Even the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 can in part be attributed to bananas. East Germans didn't get them under Communism, and the first thing they wanted to buy as they flooded west was a banana. It became a powerful symbol of German unity (I kid you not: sales rocketed, and even now East Germans remain united with West Germans in their phenomenal, world-beating consumption of bananas. It was the huge demand for the fruit that led Chancellor Kohl to take the European Community to the Court of Justice in 1994, challenging a decision reached in July 1988 that limited exports of the low-cost Latin America banana that Germans prefer. The Germans

lost, but, as is so often the case in Europe, a compromise was reached whereby a punitive tariff on Latin American bananas starts operating only after the import of 2 million tonnes per year.

But the Yanks are far from satisfied. In 1994, fed up with Europe's failure to inaugurate a free market in bananas, the US invoked section 301 of the new GATT Treaty (which itself nearly came to grief over bananas). Having had no joy from this move, the US has now issued a list of EU products on which it will impose sanctions if Europe doesn't heal its banana split by February. Britain is at the top of the list, with a potential loss of 2,400 jobs if sanctions are imposed. Bizarrely, the hardest-hit companies will be Scottish woolen manufacturers. One knitwear firm, Clan Douglas, is already suffering, with a US order worth £1m on hold until a decision comes from Washington as to whether sanctions will proceed. But, even more bizarrely, the

comedy fruit has managed - in a modest sense and quite definitely only briefly - to unite Europe. This latest skirmish in the banana war is the first stand-off between the euro and the dollar, and so far Europe is sticking together, threatening retaliatory sanctions if the US goes ahead with its unilateral trade attack (it's a delicious detail, too, that Fyffes, the Irish banana distributor responsible for the import of one in five European bananas, made European history this month by becoming the first-ever London-listed company to return its financial results in euros).

It is splendid to see Europe actually doing what it is supposed to do, even if it is over bananas, rather than merely paying lip service to the idea that Europe exists to challenge US hegemony. OK, so this is an exceptional case, which finds Britain uncharacteristically defending protectionism rather than the free market and sticking with Europe rather than allying

itself with the States (Britain's love affair with the US is so strong that we even considered it when, a while back, we were invited to ditch Europe and join Nafta). And, OK, essentially this has all come about precisely because Europe itself has been so divided over the matter for so long. But it certainly bears scrutiny as a model of how Europe could find itself a role in the future.

Europe - some of its members willingly, others unwillingly - is acting out of guilt, protecting vulnerable countries that rely on not much more than cottage industry to keep from economic disaster. The US, on the other hand, is acting out of arrogance. It is not protecting the interests of Latin America but the interests of US multinationals, which already command 70 per cent of the world banana market. How do they do that, even though they have to face such unfair restrictions in Europe? Largely because of environmentally unsound growing methods that rely

heavily on pesticides and damage the health of the Latin American workers they claim to represent.

I find it quite refreshing that for once Britain is not in bed with America, persisting with the idea that no finer democracy can ever be built than that of the United States. Here is a country with desperate financial inequality, appalling literacy rates, a shocking disregard for international diplomacy, a phenomenal prison population, an unbelievable environmental record - which even includes trading in international pollution - and a stated desire to be the world's policeman, when what the world needs is a referee. Europe may look at times like someone's idea of a joke, but if it wants to become a superpower that can capture the imagination of its people, then here's a place where it can make a start. There really is an argument for challenging US hegemony just a little bit. Let all wars be banana wars. At least they're funny.

RIGHT OF REPLY

BARONESS SYMONS



The Foreign Office Minister replies to our leading article criticising the British consular service

YOUR LEADER yesterday accused the Foreign Office of giving a low priority to the protection of British nationals abroad. You could not have been more wrong.

Last year, the Consular Service dealt with more than 9,000 British nationals who needed our help. Almost 6,000 British nationals were arrested. Our consular staff are dedicated and professional. Many work in the world's most unpleasant places, looking after British nationals with an impressive commitment.

For the British nationals concerned, no consular case is unimportant. Our consular staff know this. They know that every death, every arrest, every mugging needs sympathetic and efficient handling. The vast majority of consular cases are resolved quickly and easily.

When cases become more difficult, the whole machine will swing into action. A great deal of my time is spent discussing problem cases with officials and talking to the families concerned.

Robin Cook and other ministers get involved as well, using their influence to ensure that our nationals are protected. The Foreign Secretary has telephoned the Prime Minister of Yemen three times in the past week - to demand consular access to the detained British nationals. We cannot demand special treatment for British nationals. But we can demand their rights.

From our 9,000 cases last year, we got around 40 complaints about our consular service. That is hardly the sign of a "service in disrepair". We got twice as many letters of thanks.

We are proud of our consular service. Our people do a difficult job, often under immense pressure and in the most difficult circumstances. Your leader was off the mark.

Will the Kurds ever be a nation?

WE HAVE lived to see another spring-time of nations - like 1848, like 1918. From Azerbaijan to the Baltic, nations long buried under the rubble of empire have risen to claim a place in the sun. But not the Kurds. As with the Tibetans and East Timorese, the powers holding down this great nation of 25 million people show no sign of relaxing their grip. The dream of statehood is as far away as ever.

Partitioned after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire between Turkey, Iran and the British creation of Iraq, the Kurds have rebelled repeatedly and fruitlessly - in Iraq in 1945, in Iran in 1946, and in Iraq again in 1961, in 1963, in 1974, and during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. They rose again at



FRIDAY BOOK

KURDISTAN: AFTER SUCH KNOWLEDGE, WHAT FORGIVENESS?
BY JONATHAN C RANDAL, BLOOMSBURY, £20

the express urging of President George Bush during the Gulf War. This decade has seen a protracted, dirty war in eastern Turkey.

So much fighting for so little gain. One Kurdish leader told Jonathan Randal that they fought so desperately because they dreaded ending up like the Armenians - a dispersed nation, living in exile. But another reason

seems to be a simple addiction to a good scrap. "Better live like a hawk for a day than like a hen for the whole of your life," is one of those telling phrases Randal overhears as he bounces on the dusty roads of Kurdistan.

The results of this devotion to the spirit of the hawk have been awful. In the mid-1980s, Saddam Hussein took revenge on his Kurds for siding with his enemies in Iran by demolishing and gassing their villages. Saddam's henchman in Kurdistan, Ali Majid, gloated about the attempted genocide: Of the poison gas, "Who is going to say anything?" he asked his comrades in Iraq's Baath party. "The international community? Fuck them!" Of the Kurds, he boasted, "I shall bury them with bulldozers".

A by-product of the frantic fight for independence has been a revolving door of alliances with outside powers, who pick up and then drop the Kurds as it suits them. The Kurds are "the blind beggar standing outside the main mosque", the Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani tells Randal; they are incapable of seeing who is pressing a gold coin into their palms.

Randal, a seasoned war reporter, recounts those manoeuvres and betrayals in detail, concentrating on the shoddy dealings of the Shah of Iran, who stirred up a revolt among the Kurds in Iraq in the 1970s only to drop them into Saddam's vice in 1975.

George Bush was no better. After egging the Kurds on to revolt during the Gulf War, he professed indifference when they did so, leaving them to be defeated and sent fleeing in their



Kurds fleeing from northern Iraq into Turkey

Hugh Pope

hundreds of thousands into Turkey. The Kurds, Randal says, are given to ruminating on the gap between the efforts they have invested in securing freedom and the meagre result.

"Those Kurds who have gained glory by their swords," one 17th-century poet wrote, "How is it they are denied the empire of the world and are subject to others?" Randal - for all his compassion - is too honest to deny that much of the answer to that riddle lies in the Kurds' own fissiparous tendencies.

A classic example came in 1981 when, shamed by the condemnation of his wimpish behaviour, President Bush set up Operation Provide Comfort, with a "no-fly" zone over Iraqi Kurdistan. When a Kurdish parliament was elected the following year, it seemed *de facto* statehood was almost within their grasp.

But after only a few years, those gains were in ruins. Saddam's earlier triumphs in herding the Kurds from their rural fastnesses into the cities had created a gulf between traditionalists and the urban masses. Instead

of uniting against Saddam, the Kurds dissipated their energies fighting each other. Much to the disgust of friends in the West, Barzani even called on the murderous Saddam to help him defeat his rival, Jala Talabani.

In an age when peace of a kind seems within reach in Ireland, East Timor, maybe even Kosovo, the Kurds seem to defy the slenderest hopes of a solution. The West can do nothing for Kurds in Turkey for fear of angering their key Nato ally. And the Kurds must never be seen to approaching the trapings of statehood in Iraq, in case this, too, undermines the status quo in eastern Turkey. If Saddam stays in power, the threat of chemical warfare hangs over them. If he goes, his successor will surely demand the restoration of full Iraqi rule over Kurdistan.

No wonder Randal's account of disasters followed by revivals ends on a sombre note. "Somehow," he writes, "I doubt that the prediction of eternal resurrection will come true in what remains of my working lifetime."

MARCUS TANNER

FRIDAY POEM

'DOGS, WOULD YOU LIVE FOR EVER?'

(FREDERICK THE GREAT)

BY BERNARD O'DONOGHUE

She's bent at stool, as the saying is,
Next to her deathbed. Her arched back
Is like white fish
That has been too long in the fridge.
Greyed at the spine-bones.

Crying, she says 'this is the worst now.'
I say 'of course it's not.
You did as much for children
Often enough.'

But of course it was: the scene
Comes back, unrigged, more
Rather than less often,
Oddly enough.

I'd prefer you to wait outside.

This poem comes from Bernard O'Donoghue's new collection, 'Here Nor There' (Chatto & Windus, £8.99)



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THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OU EXPERIENCE

Dr Paul Zoll

PAUL ZOLL made decisive contributions to treatment of life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias by the invention and successful application in humans of the cardiac pacemaker, cardiac defibrillator, and cardiac monitoring in the 1950s. His discoveries saved and improved the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

He was born in 1911 in Boston, Massachusetts. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Harvard College in 1932 and an MD from Harvard Medical School in 1936. His residency training was at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston and Bellevue Hospital in New York City. In 1939, he returned to Beth Israel Hospital as a research fellow in cardiology.

Initially, he worked under Dr Monroe Schlesinger and Dr Herman Blumgart on the pathology of coronary arteries by injecting dye into the post-mortem human heart. He studied the relationship between the blockage of the coronary artery and chest pain and heart attack. This study was the forerunner of the modern-day coronary angiography and served as an important foundation of the pathogenesis of atherosclerotic ischaemic heart disease.

During the Second World War, Zoll served as an Army Medical Officer in the UK. There, he witnessed Dr Dwight Harken, his classmate at Harvard, remove foreign bodies (such as shell fragments) from around the heart. Zoll was impressed that the heart was highly excitable: whenever Harken touched the heart with forceps, it generated an extra beat.

In 1949, Zoll cared for a patient in her sixties who had recurrent fainting spells due to her heart intermittently being arrested. The patient died three weeks later and this greatly frustrated Zoll. He thought she would not have died if he had a way to stimulate the heart. Recalling his observation in the UK, he started to perform laboratory experiments to explore methods to pace the heart without opening the chest. This led to a successful electrical pacing of the human heart through the chest, saving the life of a patient in 1952. Following this, a number of groups in the world raced to develop a permanent implantable pacemaker - Zoll's group was among the first to apply it in 1960 to patients.

While the pacemaker was life-saving for cardiac standstill or slow rhythm, it was not effective for another kind of cardiac arrest - ventricular fibrillation (chaotic heart rhythm, commonly seen after a heart attack or severe heart failure). In 1956, Zoll was the first successfully to perform external cardiac defibrillation - the application of electric countershock to stop the chaotic



Zoll pioneered three critical areas of modern therapeutic electrophysiology: the cardiac pacemaker, the cardiac defibrillator and the continuous cardiac monitor. He deserved the Nobel Prize

rhythm. Cardiac defibrillators are now equipped in every hospital, ambulance, and even in commercial airlines, as it is the most rapid and effective procedure to terminate this lethal rhythm. Zoll also found that the cardiac defibrillation was effective in terminating most cases of life-threatening rapid heart rate.

Another important invention Zoll made during this time was the development of continuous cardiac monitoring with an oscilloscope with audio alarms. This allowed an immediate detection of irregular heart rhythm and patients could be treated without delay. The cardiac monitor is now standard in every coronary care unit, in intensive care units, operating rooms, and recov-

ery rooms. Remarkably, Zoll did not patent any of his revolutionary inventions in medical technology. This allowed rapid dissemination of the technology throughout the world without patent restrictions and, therefore, contributed to saving millions of lives.

Zoll was head of the Cardiac Clinic at Beth Israel Hospital from 1947 to 1958. He was Associate Editor of *Circulation*, the official journal of the American Heart Association, from 1956 to 1965. He became a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School in 1965. He maintained active clinical practice up until the early 1990s and continued to perform research on the external cardiac pacemaker.

In the 1980s, Zoll and his son founded Zoll Medical Corporation, based on new, painless external electrodes Zoll developed in the later years. Zoll was quite extraordinary in that he pioneered three critical areas of modern therapeutic electrophysiology: the cardiac pacemaker, the cardiac defibrillator, and the continuous cardiac monitor, enabling immediate diagnosis and treatment of potentially fatal cardiac arrhythmias. Any one of these would have been quite an accomplishment for a professor of cardiology. Furthermore, his concept laid the foundation for the development of highly sophisticated devices, such as anti-tachycardia pacemakers and implantable cardiac defibrillators.

In 1973, he received the prestigious Albert Lasker Award - many of those awarded this honour go on to receive a Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology. Indeed, given the impact of Zoll's work, he would have been a well-deserved recipient of the Nobel Prize. Nevertheless, his name will always be remembered because the cardiac pacemaker, cardiac defibrillator, and cardiac monitor will stay forever as the most important armamentarium of cardiologists. Ordered electrical activity is inherently fundamental for the heart and it was Paul Zoll who first taught us that electricity can (and should) be used to treat fatal cardiac arrhythmias in humans.

SEIGO IZUMO

Paul Maurice Zoll, cardiologist: born Boston, Massachusetts 15 July 1911; assistant in medicine, Beth Israel Hospital, Boston 1939-54; Head of Cardiac Clinic 1947-58; Physician 1954-93 (Honorary Senior Physician 1993); Research Fellow, Harvard Medical School 1941-65; Clinical Professor of Medicine 1965-93 (Emeritus); married 1939 Janet Jones (deceased); one son, one daughter; 1981 Ann Blumgart Gurewicz; died Newton, Massachusetts 5 January 1999.



James Garner (left) and Donald Pleasence in *The Great Escape*, 1963. Zillesen considered Garner 'a little bulky' for the part

Marcel Zillesen

NEVER COULD Marcel Zillesen have thought, as his Hurricane crashed in the isolated area of Wadi Akarit in Tunisia, that his life would one day be portrayed in a classic war film.

Zillesen was a pilot with No 6 Squadron during the final phase of the action in North Africa. Equipped with 8mm cannons, the Hurricane was used in low-level 'tank-busting' raids. Having just returned from leave, Zillesen had been ordered to fly as a last-minute replacement. He was shot down and captured on 6 April 1943. What his captors never realised was that he spoke fluent German. Before the Second World War, his father's business had contacts in Germany and he had been sent there to learn the language.

Various pressures were put upon Zillesen by his interrogators. They plied him with whisky; little knowing that in the bars of Alexandria he could drink most of his squadron members under the table. Then a lithe 6ft blonde woman was sent to his cell. However, he had heard his captors say that if he touched her they could call in the Gestapo to interrogate him. He simply curled up in a corner and would have nothing to do with the Teutonic temptress. He was eventually transported to

Stalag Luft 3, where gradually he earned the trust of the guards by speaking to them in their own language, especially about their wives and girlfriends. They were soon asking him to write love letters home, bringing him paper, pens and ink to do so. Any surplus material Zillesen secreted away so that the camp 'forgers' could work on vital documents and passports in readiness for the intended escape.

On the night of 23 March 1944, with the escape tunnel complete, under cover of darkness 200 Allied officers assembled in a hut ready to escape. Seventy-six managed to get out through the tunnel before the guards realised what was happening. Zillesen was not among them. Everything had gone wrong. There had been an air-raid that night, the lights in the tunnel had gone out and one man had got stuck. Zillesen then saw men crawling back through the tunnel to the hut. To him and the rest of the waiting men this was an immense disappointment for they had spent months preparing.

It was, however, one of the largest mass breakouts by Allied prisoners. But, of the 76 who escaped, 73 were recaptured and 50 summarily executed.

This remarkable story inspired the 1963 film *The Great Escape*

which starred, among others, Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson and Richard Attenborough. Zillesen was one of several prisoners whose ability to scrounge supplies was the basis for the American played by James Garner, though in reality there were no Americans in the camp. Zillesen, although not consulted, enjoyed the film. He was particularly taken by Attenborough's performance. However, having lost six stone while a prisoner, he thought Garner 'a little bulky' for the part.



Handsomeness and self-effacing

Marcel Zillesen was born in Northampton in 1917 and educated at Gresham's School. He worked in the family textile business before joining the RAF at the outbreak of war.

Much of his time in Stalag Luft 3 was spent translating 19th-century German poetry into English. Finally, with Allied forces approaching in May 1945, the prison was evacuated and the prisoners forced to march towards Germany. During a break, Zillesen managed to escape into a nearby wood and make his way back to the empty camp. The camp was eventually liberated by British troops.

After the war he returned to the family business before moving into the wool trade in Darlington, where he remained until the early 1970s. He eventually left to set up a chain of take-away food shops in the North-East bearing the Zillesen name. In semi-retirement he and his wife kept a guest house in Robin Hood's Bay, North Yorkshire. A handsome, self-effacing man, he delighted in his four sons and his grandchildren.

MAX ARTHUR

Marcel Zillesen, pilot and businessman: born Northampton 14 January 1917; married 1951 Lyn Hudson (four sons); died Whitby, North Yorkshire 8 January 1999.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Fletcher

PETER FLETCHER will be particularly remembered as one of the best of the RAF's Whitehall warriors.

Born in Durban in 1916, he was educated at St George's College, Southern Rhodesia, and Rhodes University, South Africa, where he read Law. He then joined the Southern Rhodesia Air Force, learnt to fly, and in 1941 transferred to the RAF.

Almost immediately he was on his way to India and in January 1942, with 135 Squadron, flew a Hurricane defending Rangoon against Japanese air attack. As losses increased, some of the airmen were pulled out and Acting Squadron Leader Fletcher found himself in Ceylon. Here he took command of 258 Squadron, some of whose men had escaped after the battle of Java, and his rapidly improvised squadron helped defend the island at what Churchill later called 'the most dangerous moment of the war' - when the Japanese fleet's appearance in the Indian Ocean seemed to threaten a link-up with the Germans.

During the Japanese attack on Co-



Not 'an airman's airman'

lombo on Easter Sunday, Fletcher led his Hurricanes against a formation of enemy dive bombers. To quote the citation for his subsequent DFC:

In the ensuing combat, when at least five enemy aircraft were destroyed, his own aircraft was hit and later when attacked by a hostile fighter burst into flames. He had to bale out. Throughout this haz-

ardous operation, in which he was wounded, he displayed fine courage and leadership and destroyed one of the enemy aircraft.

Fletcher remained with 258 for the rest of the year, standing guard over Ceylon, but then his brief war was over, for in 1943 he was posted back to Southern Rhodesia to command 25 Elementary Flying Training School at Belvedere. Two years later he accepted a permanent commission and after staff training returned to the flying training world at Feltwell, in Norfolk, where his work was eventually recognised by the award of the Air Force Cross.

Next came a spell in the Air Ministry's Directorate of Plans and in 1953 he became Air Attaché in Oslo, an influential post in which he worked assiduously to keep on good terms with the Norwegian Air Force. His next posting, to the directing staff of the Imperial Defence College, showed that his staff talents were becoming widely recognised.

Now it was time for command experience and in 1958 Fletcher

became Station Commander at Abingdon, the home of two of the RAF's Beverley squadrons and of No 1 Parachute Training School. Abingdon's transport operations at home and overseas made it one of the RAF's busiest stations and with much of the work entailing co-operation with the Army, Fletcher easily established the necessary rapport with his opposite numbers. This experience would pay off later when he was appointed AOC 38 Group at Odiham and became responsible to Transport Command for providing and controlling all tactical transport support operations, especially those required by the Army.

Before this, however, Fletcher had returned to the Air Ministry, where - but for the 38 Group interlude - he would spend the whole of his remaining career. First, in 1960, he served as a Planner; next he became Director of Operational Requirements at the time when the prospects of the aircraft on which the RAF was setting high hopes, the TSR2, were being increasingly ques-

tioned. Then in 1964 Sam Elworthy, recently appointed Chief of Air Staff, made him Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Policy). Elworthy, a fellow lawyer and kindred spirit, had recognised Fletcher's qualities - his writing talents, his articulacy, his analytical ability, his capacity for hard work, his skill in putting the RAF case - and wanted his help in the aftermath of the TSR2 cancellation and in the lengthy controversy with the Navy over the future of aircraft carriers.

Fletcher's success under Elworthy was marked when in 1967, after his short spell at Odiham, he returned to Whitehall as Vice-Chief of Air Staff, this time working for John Grandy but indirectly still under Elworthy as Chief of the Defence Staff. For the next three years the RAF's withdrawals from east of Suez, the end of its primary deterrent role, the cancellation of the F1-11 and - more encouragingly - the arrival of the Harrier and the decision to develop the multi-role combat aircraft (the future Tornado) were among Fletcher's many

concerns. Then came his appointment as Controller of Aircraft, which in 1971 was converted into Air Systems Controller in the newly restructured Defence Procurement Executive. This post gave him a seat again on the Air Force Board, and his duties now included the financial and contractual aspects of aircraft procurement for all three services.

Not surprisingly, on retirement in 1973 his talents and experience were immediately in demand in the aircraft industry. In 1974 he became a Director of Hawker Siddeley; on the formation of British Aerospace in 1977 he became Director of Corporate Strategy and Planning; and from 1979 he also joined the Airbus Industry Training Board. In 1982 he finally departed the public scene.

Peter Fletcher was not widely known in the RAF; to most who came across him he seemed a private, somewhat cold, humourless and over-serious individual, not 'an airman's airman'. Those who worked with him and knew him well, however, not only saw the sense of fun

and the kindly host, but also knew the quality of his brain, his judgement, his ability to take responsibility, his command of technology, the respect he received from the experts. The RAF owes him much.

HENRY PROBERT

Peter Carteret Fletcher, air force officer: born Durban, South Africa 7 October 1916; DFC 1943; OBE 1945; AFC 1952; Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Policy and Plans) 1964-66; CB 1965, KCB 1968; AOC, No 38 Group, Transport Command 1966-67; Vice-Chief of the Air Staff 1967-70; Controller of Aircraft, Ministry of Aviation, Supply 1970-71; Air Systems Controller, Defence Procurement Executive, Ministry of Defence 1971-73; Director, Hawker Siddeley Aviation Ltd 1974-77; Director, Corporate Strategy and Planning, British Aerospace 1977-82; Director, Airbus Industry Supervisory Board 1979-82; married 1940 Marjorie Kotze (two daughters); died London 2 January 1999.

Drucie Bowett

DRUCIE BOWETT was one of a remarkable group of artists who came to attention in the years following the Second World War.

Paintings of hers were featured in many of the prestigious Midland Group exhibitions held in Nottingham during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Unlike some of these artists Bowett chose to remain in the north Midlands whilst others pursued their careers in the South. This was to the gain of her family and friends and to that of discerning collectors who bought her work. Her paintings can be found in many public galleries, county council collections, the boardrooms of industry and numerous private collections in Britain and abroad.

She was born Drucilla Glover in

Ripon in 1924 - her Yorkshire roots were vital to her sense of identity. She attended Queen Margaret's School, York, which was evacuated to Castle Howard at the outbreak of war. There in 1940 fire destroyed many of their belongings. She was determined enough quickly to repair the loss of her paintings with compensation money she received.

At Harrogate School of Art, advised to study 'commercial art', she rebelled in favour of Fine Art, drawing and painting. Tutors came from the Royal College of Art and the Slade, bringing with them the current academic style, but it was Jean-Georges Simon, newly arrived from Paris, who opened her eyes to a wider European modern style of clean bright

colour and formal discipline. His influence was lifelong. The confident abstraction of Bowett's mature work can be traced back to Simon.

Marriage in 1943 to John Bowett, a veterinary surgeon, gave her a richly varied life. She loved horses and the excitement of the race-course, travelled with her husband, and the devoted mother of three sons. Yet painting was always paramount.

She made contact with the Midland Group through calling, with extreme trepidation, on its founder, the painter and teacher Evelyn Gibbs. The older woman invited her in, approved of her painting, and long years of friendship followed. Soon Drucie Bowett became one of the active members of the group, helping as they all did to decorate and pre-

pare the temporary venues for exhibitions of the most illustrious artists of the time. Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland among them, and Bowett's contemporaries Terry Frost and Prunella Clough.

Bowett exhibited her own early work, mainly landscapes and industrial views. During the 1950s she concentrated on honing her style to the edge of abstraction. A hard-won clarity and abstraction of form was achieved during the 1960s in such paintings as *Brown and Yellow* and *Wookery*. By 1982, the date of her first London solo show at the Drian Gallery, she had held over 20 solo exhibitions.

The middle years of Drucie Bowett's life were affected by bouts of illness and the diagnosis of dia-

betes but her motto 'Persevere, persevere!' stood her in good stead for the increasing struggles with illness when her husband's health also declined. His death was a great blow to her art, but eventually she found a means to express her loss through an extraordinary series of paintings whose emotive images recall their closeness. These were shown at her crucial exhibitions in the 1990s at the newly opened Pierpoint Gallery, Nottinghamshire, and at Bradford and Nottingham.

'Given Space', at Cartwright Hall, Bradford, in 1995 showed Bowett to be a painter at the height of her powers. The paintings were bravura displays of colour, light and form, about sensations of space, nearness and distance, sometimes

having the stillness of a Ben Nicholson, sometimes the directness of a Terry Frost.

Her career in painting was matched by public responsibilities. For many years she gave her time and experience to the East Midlands region as committee member, then chair, of the governing bodies of Chesterfield and Loughborough Colleges of Art and Design. She was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and remained the most dedicated supporter and advocate of all forms of serious art practice.

Before her latest illness, she gave the opening speech with all her regular vigour and humour at an exhibition of the work of her friend Evelyn Gibbs, who died in 1991.

PAULINE LUCAS



'Persevere, persevere!'

Drucilla Ellen Glover, painter: born Ripon, Yorkshire 1924; married 1943 John Bowett (died 1994; three sons); died Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire 4 December 1998.

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Dorothy Nyembe

DOROTHY NYEMBE was one of a generation of forceful women whose courage, energy and commitment helped to bring down the regime of apartheid. She spent 18 years in prison in South Africa during the bleakest period of "the struggle", but her name appears in few of the current histories.

In large part this is because national and international attention has tended to concentrate on the fate of a single person as a metaphor for the struggle as a whole: and this was Nelson Mandela. Yet the life of Dorothy Nyembe will perhaps one day be seen to have even wider significance, given the continuing deep-seated structural persistence of patriarchal values in southern Africa.

Born in 1931 in the rural area of what is now KwaZulu-Natal, Nyembe placed herself right at the front in contesting racial and social oppression at a time when international concern about apartheid in Western countries was all but non-existent.

Joining the African National Congress in her early twenties, she became a leading member of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW), a non-racial body allied to the ANC which was founded in April 1954.

In 1955 the Minister of Native Affairs announced that passes were to be issued to African women - in the same manner long in existence for African men - beginning from January 1956. There was no more hated instrument of servitude in apartheid South Africa than the pass. As a means of enforcing despotic state control over personal and civil life, and as the means by which sooner or later nearly every African man in the urban areas entered prison for a longer or shorter period, following an ugly encounter with the police, the idea that women too should be subjected to such humiliation and harassment was intolerable.

This led to the women's anti-pass campaigns of 1955 and 1956, in which Nyembe played a leading part, mobilising Zulu-speaking women in the KwaZulu-Natal area. These campaigns both rallied resistance to the state, and helped shake notions of women's subordination to domesticity among black men.

"Strydom, wathini' abafazi, wathini' imbokodo" were the words of a song of the women's anti-pass campaign - "Strydom [the apartheid prime minister of the day], you have touched the women, you have struck a rock." Dorothy Nyembe was one such rock. During the Defiance Campaign against unjust laws in 1952, she was imprisoned twice. She then led the contingent from Natal in a protest by 20,000 women from all over South Africa - many of them the poorest of the poor - who assembled in Pretoria on 9

August 1956, now South African Women's Day, to march on the Union Buildings, the headquarters of government, to oppose the extension of passes to women.

As the application of the pass laws to women continued in full force, anger among women in the Cato Manor shanty town outside Durban in Natal took the form of campaigns against the system of municipal beer-halls. Women in particular felt huge resentment because the law forbade Africans - in practice, usually African women - from brewing traditional beer at home, while the men often spent much of the family income in the municipal beer-halls, which in turn supported the administrative machinery of apartheid through tax revenue. In 1959 brutal police raids aimed at smashing up home brewing led to tremendous anger, riots and killings by the police at Cato Manor. As chairperson of FSAW in Natal, Dorothy Nyembe and other FSAW leaders such as Florence Mkhize and Gladys Manzi called for a total boycott of the beer-halls. In huge demonstrations, women armed with sticks marched into the beer-halls,

'Strydom,' went the words of the song, 'you have touched the women, you have struck a rock'

attacking men who were drinking, and wrecking the facilities, despite the presence of police. The drinkers fled.

One vivid account recalls that the women

were very powerful. Some came half dressed (in traditional dress) with their breasts exposed, and when they got near this place the police tried to block the women. When they saw this, the women turned and pulled up their skirts. The police closed their eyes and the women passed by and went in.

At her funeral at Umlazi, outside Durban, shortly after Christmas, one respectful man ruefully reflected that he still carried the scar where Nyembe had hit him during the beer-hall protests.

During the same year, Nyembe was "endorsed out" of the Durban area by the government - effectively, exiled. Then came the massacre at Sharpeville in March 1960 and the subsequent state of emergency, accompanied by the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist



Nyembe served 15 years in prison from 1969

Congress, when Nyembe was detained with hundreds of others for five months. On her release she became active in helping to rouse rural women against the state, principally around the issue of opposition to government regulations on the dipping of cattle.

These were very grim times, as political organisations concluded that means of peaceful resistance had become futile, and the state responded with even fiercer repression. In 1963 Nyembe was found guilty of furthering the aims of the ANC, and sentenced to three years in jail.

After her release, she was again arrested in 1968 and sentenced in February 1969 to 15 years in jail under the Terrorism Act and the Suppression of Communism Act, accused of assisting Umkhonto weSizwe, the military wing of the ANC. These long years in prison, served in full while Mandela and his male colleagues were on Robben Island,

were spent in prisons for women at Barberton in the eastern Transvaal, and then at Kroonstad in the Orange Free State, far from her family. Her prison work involved washing the clothes of male convicts.

She was released in 1984 and in 1994, in the first non-racial elections, she became a Member of Parliament.

Along with the lives of other heroic women of combat in the South African struggle (such as Lilian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu and Ruth First), the stormy life of Dorothy Nyembe richly deserved the tribute of another song of the women's anti-pass campaign: "Igama lamakoskazi Malibangwe" - "Let the name of the women be praised."

PAUL TREWHELLA

Dorothy Nyembe, political activist and women's rights campaigner; born Tulum, South Africa 1931; died Umlazi, South Africa 17 December 1998.

HISTORICAL NOTES

MAURICE COTTERELL

A feathered snake and a man with a beard

LEGENDS SAY that a bearded white man, with fair hair and blue eyes, brought super-knowledge to the Maya. He taught them the mysteries of the heavens, the laws of mathematics and astronomy, and the skills of the artisan. He taught them to build their pyramids and palaces of stone. Above all else, he taught them wisdom; that purification would come through sacrifice, and that immortality awaited the souls of the pure.

They say that when he died he became the morning star, Venus. He walked, in turn, among the Olmecs, the Teotihuacanos, the Maya, Toltec and Aztec. They called him Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, god of goodness and wisdom.

Others, too, spoke of the bearded white man. The Incas, in Peru, called him Viracocha, while their neighbours the Aymara called him Hyustus. In Bolivia he was known as the "God of the Wind". To the Polynesians he was known as Kon-Tiki, the Sun-God. Always, when he left, his promise was the same: one day he would return.

More evidence of the legend of "Quetzalcoatl" exists in the tomb of the Mayan priest-king Lord Pacal, at Palenque, in Mexico, than anywhere else. We know this from secret pictures encoded into Mayan artefacts, revealed for the first time in 1933, when the code of Maya carving was finally broken.

These show Lord Pacal quite clearly, unambiguously, as a feathered snake. They knew, from his teachings, that the sun affected fertility and that the world had been created four times before and that each creation ended in catastrophic destruction, which they blamed on the sun. To them the sun was God.

No one has ever explained the connection between the sun and this feathered snake, or the man with the beard, until now.

The decoded pictures tell us he took to the throne at the age of 29, and that he was born following an immaculate conception, more than 1,250 years ago in the jungles of Mexico.

At the age of nine, 3,000 years ago, on the banks of the Nile, another boy-king took to the throne. His name was Tutankhamun, the living image of God. For more than 75 years, since his tomb was opened, experts have tried to explain the legacy of the enigmatic pharaoh. Now, using knowledge of Maya encoding, together with the latest in scientific understanding, the life, the times and the tomb of Tutankhamun have been re-examined.

The secrets of the boy-king, kept safe for more than 3,000 years, reveal that he too taught his people the super-science of the sun, which they worshipped as the god of fertility. He too performed miracles. They say that when he died he too went to the stars; to become one with

Orion, in the Milky Way. He too was called the feathered snake, which he carried on his forehead with the vulture and the cobra.

Why did the ancients encode their super-knowledge into their treasures? They knew that, upon death, they would reincarnate on Earth, for another attempt at soul purification or return to God, the creator of the universe, to live forever in the stars. In this way, they believed, God grows and the universe expands. They encoded their secrets for themselves to rediscover should they ever return, giving them a better chance next time, if they didn't make it this time.

The discoveries suggest that ancient mythological beliefs could actually be fact, meaning that this human experience is merely a subordinate state to that of our underlying spiritual nature, as eulogised by the ancients.

This revered knowledge is known and thrives today, hidden in the cathedrals of medieval Europe, concealed in sacred geometry, in whispered words, behind closed doors, by the church, the highest orders of Freemasonry and other secret societies. The decoding of the treasures of Tutankhamun reveal, for the first time ever, the reason for the secrecy.

Maurice Cotterell is the author of 'The Tutankhamun Prophecies' (Headline, 28 January, £13.99)

William Whyte

WILLIAM WHYTE was an accomplished urbanologist and observer of corporate life whose best-selling book *The Organization Man* helped to define what it meant to be an employee of a large firm in the America of the Fifties. His thesis - that rugged US individualism and entrepreneurial spirit were being subsumed into the conformist norms of the corporate world - brought him widespread attention at a time when a number of searching works, including J.K. Galbraith's *American Capitalism* (1952), were questioning the wisdom of the prevailing social and economic structure.

Whyte suggested that the hold visions of individualists had been replaced by the modest aspirations of organization men who lower their sights to achieve a good job with adequate pay and proper pension and a nice house in a pleasant community populated with people as nearly like themselves as possible.

Moreover, the modest ambitions of

the organisational man had spread to academic and scientific institutions, and prevailed in white-collar homes in the suburbs then proliferating across America. "Most wives agreed with the corporation; they too felt that the good wife is the wife who adjusts gracefully to the system, curbs open intellectualism or the desire to be alone," he wrote.

He argued that in the desire to conform to the organisation, to make it work, its employees had come close to deifying it. By describing its defects as virtues and denying that there is - or should be - a conflict between the individual and the organisation was bad for the organisation and worse for the individual. Whyte advocated resistance. "Fight the organization," he wrote in his book. "But not self-destructively."

To many, his book appeared to be an attack on corporate life, a charge Whyte denied. As an editor of *Fortune* magazine, he later explained, he was himself an organisational man and remained op-

timistic about the possibility of individualism within the corporate life. "I meant no slight. Quite the contrary. My point was that these were the people who were running the country, not the rugged individualists of American folklore."

After publication of his book in 1956, Whyte embarked on a second career as an observer of street life and urban space. As such, he wrote, taught, planned and spent 16 years watching and filming what people do on the streets of New York.

He observed, for instance, that urban plazas tend to have a larger proportion of females. Courting lovers, he found, were also "regular". "Contrary to plaza lore, they do not tryst mostly in secluded places. They're right out front." Groups of men also displayed consistent habits of socialisation. "They are, for one thing, strongly attracted by pillars and flagpoles, obeying a primeval instinct, perhaps, to have something solid at their backs," he wrote. "They also favor edges."

Whyte was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where his father was a railroad executive. He graduated from Princeton in 1939 and enlisted in the Marine Corps. After he was discharged in 1945, he joined the editorial staff of *Fortune*.

Whyte's advice on the design of public spaces was heeded by municipalities across the US and his 1959 study *Conspicuous Easements* is credited with helping to bring about "open-space" legislation in states from California to New York. A fan of the bustle and life of cities, Whyte warned against "Utopianism". He believed that the city "has always been a mess and always will be something of a mess".

EDWARD HELMORE

William Hollingsworth Whyte, writer and planner; born West Chester, Pennsylvania 1 October 1917; married 1964 Jenny Bell (one daughter); died New York 12 January 1999.

No court order needed to take possession

FRIDAY LAW REPORT

15 JANUARY 1999

Ropaigalach v Barclays Bank plc
Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Henry, Lord Justice Chadwick and Lord Justice Clarke)
18 December 1998

particularly having regard to section 36 of the Administration of Justice Act 1970 as amended, to take possession of the property and sell it by auction without first having sought and obtained an order of the court.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the plaintiff's appeal against the dismissal of his originating summons seeking determination of the question whether the respondent bank had been entitled to take possession of his property and exercise its power of sale without an order of the court.

The plaintiff had mortgaged a residential property to the bank. The bank made a valid demand for payment, but the plaintiff did not repay the sum demanded. The bank wrote to the plaintiff, informing him that the property would be entered for sale in a forthcoming auction. The plaintiff was not living at the property at that time, and denied having received the letter.

The property was sold at auction, and on 31 December 1996 the bank informed the plaintiff that the sale had been completed. The plaintiff had in the meantime learned from a neighbour that the property had been sold, and on 30 December had sworn an affidavit in support of an *ex parte* application for an injunction restraining the bank from proceeding with the sale.

Since the sale had already been completed, the application was refused. The plaintiff then issued an originating summons, seeking the court's determination of the question whether the bank as mortgagee had been entitled to take possession of the property.

Justice Act 1970, that the mortgagee's common law right to take possession by virtue of his estate should be exercisable only with the assistance of the court. The only conclusion as to Parliament's intention which the court could properly reach was that which could be derived from the circumstances in which the section had been enacted, the statutory context in which it appeared, and the language used, and all pointed in the same direction.

Parliament had been concerned with the problem which had arisen following the decision in *Birmingham Citizens Permanent Building Society v Count* [1962] 1 All ER 163, which had put an end to a practice under which mortgage possession summonses were adjourned to give the mortgagor an opportunity to pay by instalments. It had intended to restore the position to what it had previously been thought to be; it had not addressed its mind to the question whether the mortgagor required protection against the mortgagee who took possession without the assistance of the court.

It was impossible to be sure that Parliament had not intended, or would not have intended, had it addressed its mind to the question, to leave the position as it was in that regard. It could not therefore be appropriate to embark on an investigation whether the words which had been used in the section were capable of some construction other than that which they naturally bore.

KATE O'HANLON, Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

HOOKER: On 11 January, Canon Dr Roger, suddenly, at home in Southwick, Farnham, Surrey, aged 82. Buried in Holy Trinity, Southwick, 12 noon, on 25 January. No flowers please. Donations to CMS, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 6UT.

Announcements for BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £8.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Mr Li Wei and Miss Zhu Hua
Mr Li Wei, son of Mr Li Molin and Madam Ni Peixia, and Miss Zhu Hua, second daughter of Mr Zhu Baolin and Madam Zhou Fangcui, are to be married in Newcastle on 18 January.

BIRTHDAYS

Princess Michael of Kent, 54; Mrs Margaret Beckett MP, President of the Board of Trade, 56; Mr Chuck Berry, singer, 73; Mr Frank Bough, television presenter, 66; Sir Neil Cossons, Director, Science Museum, 60; Lord Dacre of Glanton, former Master, Peterhouse, Cambridge, 85; Dame Mary Hogg QC, High Court judge, 52; Professor David

Kendall, Emeritus Professor of Mathematical Statistics, Cambridge University, 81; Mr Melvin J. Lasky, former editor and publisher of *Encounter*, 79; Professor Peter Maitlis, Professor of Chemistry, Sheffield University, 66; Sir Thomas Morison, High Court judge, 60; Miss Margaret O'Brien, actress, 62; Lord Sewel, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 52; Lord Simon of Glaisdale, former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 88; Sir John Smith QC, Emeritus Professor of Law, 77; Mr John Terraine, writer, 78; Mr Frank Thornton, actor and comedian, 78; Mr Andrew Tyrie MP, 41.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), playwright, baptised 1622; Martin Luther King, civil rights

leader, 1929. Deaths: Emma, Lady Hamilton (Lyon), mistress to Lord Nelson, 1815; Sammy Cahn, lyricist, 1993. On this day: the Act of Supremacy was passed, 1534; the British Museum opened in London, 1759. Today is the Feast Day of St Bonitus or Bonet, St Ceolwulf, St Isidore of Alexandria, St Ita, St John Calybites and St Macarius the Elder.

LUNCHEONS

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Mr Richard Lay, President, and Mr Jonathan Harris, Vice-President, hosted a lunch on Wednesday at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, London SW1, for Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State, Department of Education and Employment, who spoke on "Lifelong Learning".

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales visits Montpelier Junior School at Exeter Park, Plymouth; and, as Visitor, St Luke's Hospice Plymouth, visits the Hospice at Turnchapel, Plymouth.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

SYNAGOGUE SERVICES

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 4.05pm.
United Synagogue: 0171-342 9885. Federation of Synagogues: 0171-292 2262. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-539 1023. Reform Synagogues of Great Britain: 0121-348 4721. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-286 2273. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-229 1022.

IN *Let Nothing You Dismay*, Mark O'Donnell's recent witty novel about Christmas in Manhattan, the hapless hero "strategised triage on the remaining parties"; in reporting on Y2K, *The New York Times* notes that companies are "resorting to triage, fixing the most important programs first and worrying about minor

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
triage, n. and v.

ones later." This shows the circular course which language takes.

From the French *trier*, to cull, the adjective *trier* meant

excellent, as in Spenser's "feete of silver trye". By the 19th century, coffee beans were best, middling or triage; by 1930, in *Stretchers* by R.A. Fother, it acquired a medical hue (a "triage officer"), to determine the urgency of wounds awaiting operation. American hospitals have triage units. It is unlikely to be a Starbucks brew.

Enmity on the jet-ski Bounty

MARK STEEL

Work it, girl: Janet on the catwalk, right, and sharing the applause with designer Antonio d'Amico, above
Chris Moore

MARK STEEL

Which is why it was so enlightening to find that the people the salesmen seemed to have the most contempt for were the ones who really could afford the things. "These are beautifully crafted boats," one said. "But all they want to know is how much leg-room there is in the cabin."

an, wearing his hat' *Neville*

"I don't like the word 'muses' they were people." So how did he create them? "To him, the world was led by women: the muses were his friends. He had to be inspired by them. He had to be inspired by them to write, although some people go on to say that he was a natural writer. Her brother William describes how his mother suffered in silence. "It was difficult," Lucia agrees. "But I understood the most important thing that my father was able to write."

In one of her book's most compelling sequences, Lucia describes the trauma of being an outsider in a world that was not her own.

For Lucia, her father's contradictions are amusing rather than hypocritical. She describes taking him to a film version of his story, "The Shout". One scene had a couple in a bath together. Graves declared loudly, "How disgusting." "I thought, how funny he is so prudish," says Lucia. "But he was born in 1895."

In his final years, when Graves was enfeebled by senile dementia, Lucia would read to him. "He tried to write, but the words wouldn't come."

Robert Graves died at the same moment his daughter drew out from the typewriter the final page of her translation of his book, *Wife to Mr Milton*. Immediately, she says, her image of him reverted to that of an energetic man wearing his hat, striding through Deya. It is a picture which she lovingly perpetuates in her memoir:

'A Woman Unknown, Voices from a Spanish Life' (Virago £18.99)

[illegible]

THE DISCOVERY of a planet before a distant star does these days arouse much more interest than it did in 1905, but there are about a dozen such additional planets announced by astronomers from Japan and New Zealand at the weekend, mostly in a critical, but what was missing was the method used to detect it - and nothing about our *future* two distant Earth siblings that could harbour life.

Called "gravitational lensing", this technique on the fact that passing close to a massive body will be bent by a distance to its mass. This method was used in 1993 by European astronomers at the time of the first solar transit that should be hidden behind the Sun, but visible, because bent around its

Q: Do bears hibernate, a state of torpor, dormancy or inactivity, is used by bears and other animals to adapt to a shortage of nutrition during the winter? Bear hibernation is different from that of other animals.

A: Not all bears hibernate. Bears that live in the warmer parts of the world do not hibernate. Some bears that live in the northern parts of the world do not eat, drink or defecate. They are absorbed through the bladder wall and are converted into energy.

**Psychiatrist Edward Bullmore
traces 1,000 years of thinking
about thought**

PLUS

**Novelist and former prisoner
Ronan Bennett describes
life in a prison cell**

Scientists attempting to estimate the numbers likely to die from the human version of 'mad cow disease' have some important new clues that could help direct their research. By Steve Connor

How many more will die?

Thirty-five people have so far died of the human version of "mad cow" disease. The question everyone wants answered is: how many more are destined to suffer from the new variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (nvCJD), the debilitating and invariably fatal brain disorder. Several teams of researchers are working on the problem, but it is proving to be one of the most difficult projects in predictive science.

There are at least four things we need to know before making even a reasonable guess at the likely size of the nvCJD epidemic. The first is an estimate of the total amount of beef products contaminated with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) that went into food destined for human beings during the Eighties, when the cattle epidemic was at its peak and before the government introduced the first control measures to protect human health.

The second is the incubation period in humans, between being exposed to BSE and showing the first symptoms of nvCJD. If the average incubation period is long, and evidence from other forms of spongiform encephalopathies indicates that it could be up to 50 years or more, then the relatively small numbers of people who have died so far could be just the beginning of an epidemic of "biblical proportions", as a senior government adviser once described the potential danger.

Next we need to understand the nature of the "species barrier" between man and cow. This indicates how difficult it is for an infective agent to pass from one species to another. If the species barrier is effective it could have substantially limited the transmission of BSE to humans, and the final death toll could be mercifully small.

Finally, scientists would like to know how people with different genetic constitutions react after they have eaten food contaminated with BSE. It is known, again from work on diseases similar to nvCJD, that whatever the agent is that causes a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy in human beings or other animals, its effects can be radically altered by the genes of its host organism. Some people infected with BSE may end up developing a disease quite unlike nvCJD purely because of their genes, or some people may be born with genes that confer resistance to BSE altogether.

A central problem for any scientist trying to estimate the likelihood of a future nvCJD epidemic is that none of these four pillars of knowledge has yet been built. There are only hints of they may look like, and even this information may be inaccurate when it comes to a disease that no doctor had heard of before 1996, when nvCJD was formally described for the first time in the medical literature.

Take the amount of BSE that people ate in the Eighties. The most likely bovine material to harbour the infective agent is brain and spinal cord, and it would be useful for scientists to know how much of this



From top row, right to left: Nina Cadwallader, who died in 1997 aged 23; Stephen Churchill, just 19 when he died in 1996; Clare Tomkins, aged 25 when she died in 1998; Matthew Parker, who died aged 19 in 1997; Pamela Bayless, 24 at her death in 1998; Chris Warne, aged 36 when he died in 1997

official was offered for consumption. Unfortunately, the only attempt so far to carry out a "food audit" of BSE material has produced data of limited value. The Leatherhead Food Research Agency, an industry-funded organisation commissioned to investigate the problem by the Government, estimated that 270,000 bovine brains

about the way the food industry used brains, spinal cord and bovine offal before it was banned for human consumption at the end of the Eighties.

Another of the four pillars of knowledge concerns the genetics of nvCJD. All the people who have so far died of the disease share a common genetic trait. Technically

Normally there is nothing to distinguish these three different genetic "types" in the human population — they are all normally healthy. However, when someone is infected with BSE it is possible that the versions of the codon 129 on the prp gene which they have inherited may result in either a different incubation period, or a different clinical condition, or both.

Pioneering research by Alan Dickinson at the Neuropathogenesis Unit in Edinburgh established nearly 30 years ago the importance of genes in incubation periods for spongiform encephalopathies in animals. More recent work by Moira Bruce has defined the precise combination of genes in mice that result in differences in incubation periods for BSE. It is this work on animals that has led scientists to suspect that something similar might happen in humans.

Evidence from human research that this could be the case comes from a study of the victims of kuru, a CJD-like disease that affected New Guinea tribespeople who engaged in cannibalistic behaviour, who caught the disease by eating or handling contaminated brains of dead relatives.

Paul Brown and colleagues from the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, studied 92 frozen blood samples stored since the Fifties from kuru victims to compare the genetic make-up of the codon 129 site on the prp gene with clinical features of the disease, such as the estimated incubation period. They found that people who were homozygous at codon 129 developed the illness earlier than those victims who were heterozygous.

The scientists concluded that what they found may have implications for the future course of nvCJD in Britain. It may be that the reason we have seen only people who are methionine homozygous with the disease is that others — the heterozygotes or homozygous valine types — may have a longer incubation period.

"If nvCJD behaves like kuru, future cases (with longer incubation periods) may begin to occur in older individuals with heterozygous codon 129 genotypes and signal a maturing evolution of the nvCJD 'epidemic'," the scientists concluded in their research report.

Another concern is that people who are heterozygous at codon 129 — about half the population — may, if they are infected with BSE, end up developing a disease quite unlike nvCJD. There is a precedent for this in a bizarre and extremely rare inherited condition known as fatal familial insomnia (FFI), a brain disorder in which people eventually die from lack of sleep.

It is now known that FFI occurs because of an inherited defect in the prp gene, this time at a site on the gene known as codon 178. But what is striking is that a defect at this site results in FFI only if patients are also homozygous for methionine at 129. If they have valine at codon 129, the patients who inherit the codon 178 defect develop a more classical form of CJD, with symptoms quite unlike those of FFI.

What worries scientists such as Bob Will, director of the National CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh, is that BSE could cause a disease quite unlike nvCJD in people who are not methionine homozygotes. "We have no evidence that it will, but we cannot rule it out," he says.

With no way of accurately estimating the typical incubation period of nvCJD and almost no knowledge of the species barrier that may have protected humans against infection, scientists trying to estimate how many will die of human BSE are facing formidable problems.

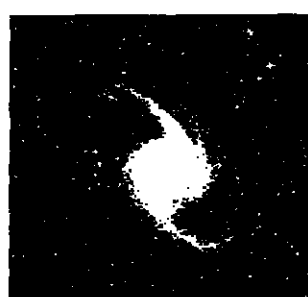
The only real insight into the future course of the epidemic will come about when a reliable test is developed to detect people incubating nvCJD at an early stage. Today's announcement of a tonsil test for people with nvCJD could be the breakthrough scientists have been waiting for.

There are at least four things we need to know before making a reasonable guess at the likely size of the new variant CJD epidemic

THE TRUTH ABOUT... GRAVITATIONAL MICROLENSING

THE DISCOVERY of a planet orbiting a distant star does not, these days, arouse much comment. The first was identified in 1995, but there are now 17 listed, and so the addition of another, announced by a team from Japan and New Zealand at the weekend, might not seem unusual. But what was interesting was the method they used to detect it — and what it implies about our future ability to detect Earth-sized planets that could harbour life.

Called "gravitational microlensing", this technique relies on the fact that light passing close to a massive object will be bent by a degree related to its mass. Exactly this method was used in 1919 to verify Einstein's theory of relativity. During a total solar eclipse, starlight that should have been hidden behind the Sun was actually visible, because it had been bent around the star's



Search for a star? SPL

massive body by its gravity.

Microlensing, however, is a more subtle application of this effect. It requires two stars — a very distant one and a nearer one, around which the extra-solar planet revolves. When the distant star passes behind the nearer one, a ring of light is formed, as the distant star's light is equally bent around the nearer star's mass.

The diameter of this ring is measured in "arcseconds",

subdivisions of a degree in a circle. But such events usually produce rings which are only micro-arcseconds in size; hence the name "microlensing", and typically last 40 days. If the nearer star has a planet orbiting it, then there will be an extra peak in the microlensing ring's intensity, lasting perhaps a few hours for an Earth-sized planet. That was what the team observed.

Previously, extrasolar planets were detected — or their existence extrapolated — by examining the movements of stars for "wobble". This wobbling would be caused by massive objects moving elliptically around its parent star. But to induce enough wobble to be detectable from Earth, the planet had to be very big, and the star relatively close. Thus most of the 17 extrasolar planets so far identified lie less than 100 light years from Earth, and have

masses at least as great as our own Jupiter — about 300 times greater than the Earth. They are unlikely candidates to foster life, as they are gas giants. Microlensing, by contrast, can identify candidate stars thousands of light years away, and infer the existence of Earth-sized planets by the length of the peaks of intensity in the light emitted. The process can even be automated, and is the most effective method for detecting planets that range in mass up to 20 times that of Earth. Though the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (Seti) has suggested putting systems into orbit which would watch stars for "transits" — the passage of a planet in front of a star — microlensing is accepted as the most effective tool available in the hunt for planets beyond our Solar System.

CHARLES ARTHUR

TECHNOQUEST

Q: Do bears hibernate?
Hibernation, a state of torpor, dormancy or inactivity, is used by some bears and other animals to adapt to a shortage of nutrition during the winter. Bear hibernation differs from that of other animals. Not all bears hibernate. Bears that live where the winter does not get too cold do not hibernate. Similarly, bears that have not put on sufficient fat stores may not hibernate, or do so only for a short time. During the hibernation of bears, they do not eat, drink or defecate. Their urea is reabsorbed through the bladder wall and safely converted into usable amino

acids and protein. Their metabolism slows down. Their body temperature drops, but never below 89 degrees. They require only half their normal oxygen intake. Their digestive organs and kidneys shut down almost completely. There is no permanent loss of muscle functioning or bone mass. They exist solely on fat and fluids in their body. They do not dehydrate. They lose up to 40 per cent of their weight, from fatty tissues. They use approximately 4,000 calories per day to maintain their body. Blood circulates more to the brain and upper body. Some bears hibernate for seven or eight months.

Q: How do rechargeable batteries work?
Normal batteries are actually distorted and largely destroyed in the process of making electricity. In the recharging process, a current from an outside source is pushed through the cell in a direction opposite to that from which it was drawn originally. This reverses the reaction that happened during discharge, restoring the anode to its metallic state, reoxidizing the positive electrode. Nickel-cadmium rechargeable cells comprise alternating layers of porous, negative cadmium anode and porous, positive nickel oxide cathode separated by absorbent layers, all

permeated with electrolyte and all inside a nickel-plated steel case. Both the cadmium anode and the nickel oxide cathode material are contained in plates. The plates are conductive, increasing efficiency. Because of this design, the anode structure is not seriously distorted as the cadmium is oxidized, nor is the cathode structure as the nickel is reduced. This gets over the biggest problem of recharging batteries — the distortion.

You can also visit the *technoquest World Wide Web site* at <http://www.sciencenet.org.uk>

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Public Notices

THE RAILWAYS ACT 1963
Application for Licence Exemption by Mid Norfolk Railway Preservation Trust ("the Applicant")

Company Registration Number: 367014

Principal address of the Applicant
Railway Station,
Dereham,
Norfolk
NR19 1DF

Directors of the Applicant:
John Sparkes Bull
Barry Dennis Woodgett
Christopher Pearson
Ernest Woolley
Andrew Murray
Raymond Arthur King

Brian Smith
Richard Tallent
Leonard Charles Elston
Paul Anthony Young
Peter Clifford Ramm
Dragan Ivan Ivanovic

The Rail Regulator hereby gives notice in accordance with section 7(4) of the Railways Act 1993 that he proposes to grant the Applicant an exemption from the requirement to be authorised by licence to operate the network which the Applicant proposes to operate between a point immediately south of Norwich Road at East Dereham, in the District of Breckland, in the County of Norfolk, at reference point TF 9935 1320 and a point immediately west of the junction of the British Railways Board's former railway and the main Thetford to Norwich railway at Wymondham, in the District of South Norfolk, in the County of Norfolk, at reference point TG 1130 0090, and generally from any requirements to hold a train operator's licence, and a station licence, on the grounds that the Applicant is proposing to operate a preserved railway, and that it is therefore not appropriate for the licensing provisions of the Railways Act to be applied to it. The Regulator proposes to revoke the licence exemption granted to the Applicant on 12 December 1997 at the same time as granting this licence exemption. Any person who wishes to make any representation or objection with respect to the proposed exemption should send such representation or objection to:

Michael Rickets
Licensing and Standards
Passenger Services Group,
Office of the Rail Regulator,
1 Waterhouse Square,
138-142 Holborn,
London EC1N 2TQ

not later than 12th February 1999.

A plan showing the extent of the railway to which the proposed network licence exemption applies is available for inspection at the above address between 10.00 and 16.00 hours on any working day.

Dated 15th January 1999

Chris Bolt

Norman Foster's first museum installation reveres the 1930s and the arrival of international modernism. By Nonie Niesewand

Foster makes an exhibition for himself

When Sir Norman Foster, Britain's most celebrated architect, studied at Manchester University in the late Fifties, working as a bouncer to pay his way, he fell in love with that city's first modern building. Owen Williams' glass-skinned building for the *Daily Express* lit up like a beacon at night, when the presses rolled off millions of copies.

"It had a dramatic quality that gave me a real architectural charge. I could walk there and back - just in my lunch hour." Years later, in 1975, Norman Foster was to adopt that glass membrane, smoky-black and at once both shiny and opaque, for the Willis Faber Dumas building in Ipswich. This, and his Hong Kong and Shanghai bank (1986), now Grade One listed, show his ability to free the facade from any visible support and give it a powerful shape, all harking back to the Mancunian building of 1939 that so impressed him as a young student.

Memories of Manchester have encouraged him to make one sentimental gesture in his punishing international schedule and agree to design the exhibition installation at the Design Museum for a show that pays homage to that period. *Modern Britain 1929-39* is just a decade in the history of architecture - but what a tumultuous time.

"Britain was a staging post for the émigrés from Europe. There was a social manifesto too, centring on inequality, heightened and dramatised by the social upheaval in Europe. The Thirties became a very tense and productive time here."

The Thirties marked the time when any fixed expectations of architecture disappeared, along with the traditional props of the construction industry. Cement flowed, spans of glass lengthened, and the pillars and posts of the stonemason's craft were replaced by reinforced steel joists. Etchell's translation into English of le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture*, in 1927, was received with tremendous enthusiasm in Britain, where white-painted blocks of flats, with swing doors and elevators as well as window walls, introduced a new way of open-plan

living. So did the cantilever - the penguin pool at London Zoo has scarcely a ripple in its glacial form. Some of these buildings have disappeared and, as the Twentieth Century Society points out, those that do survive, like the De La Warr pavilion at Bexhill on Sea, are often under threat. But the period's influence on the generation of post-war British architects has been spread around the world.

In between finishing the Reichstag in Berlin and designing a new home for London's mayor, you would

while holding one in your hand. This one folds like origami in metal."

Norman Foster's first venture into exhibition installation is a wavy wall, 124 metres long and 3 metres high, snaking along the Design Museum. This showcase for the art and artefacts of the decade between 1929 and 1939 charts a course through history.

"If you look at any particular period, you don't look at the artefacts in isolation. To be relevant you need to remind people of that time, and use the events with the objects as a narrative." Ticker-tape printouts for every year, spelling out political and cultural events, are billboarded above the exhibits. Foster has designed everything for this exhibition, down to specifying details such as Eric Gill fonts throughout. But then, as the architect Mies van der Rohe observed: "God is in the details." Colours from the Penguin paperback book covers of the Thirties signpost the routes through the exhibition.

Take 1933, the year that George Orwell described as a period of irresponsibility "such as the world has never before seen." Amelia Earhart flew over the Atlantic, Hitler challenged Hindenburg in the German elections, and troops occupied Shanghai. TS Eliot's *Waste Land* highlights a sense of fragmentation and frustration after the First World War. Despite superficial prosperity, structural problems in British society were largely ignored.

Yet through the gloom that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929, artists began to see in the alliance of geometry and nature a new source of creativity. London Underground launched posters for "The Modern God of Transport". Gerald Summers, Wells Coates and Marcel Breuer made furniture with Isokon. And Geoffrey Jellicoe, the landscaper, made a shop sign.

As the economic crisis deepened, even politicians began to espouse the cause of creative design as a means of social recovery. The parallels with 1999 are scary.

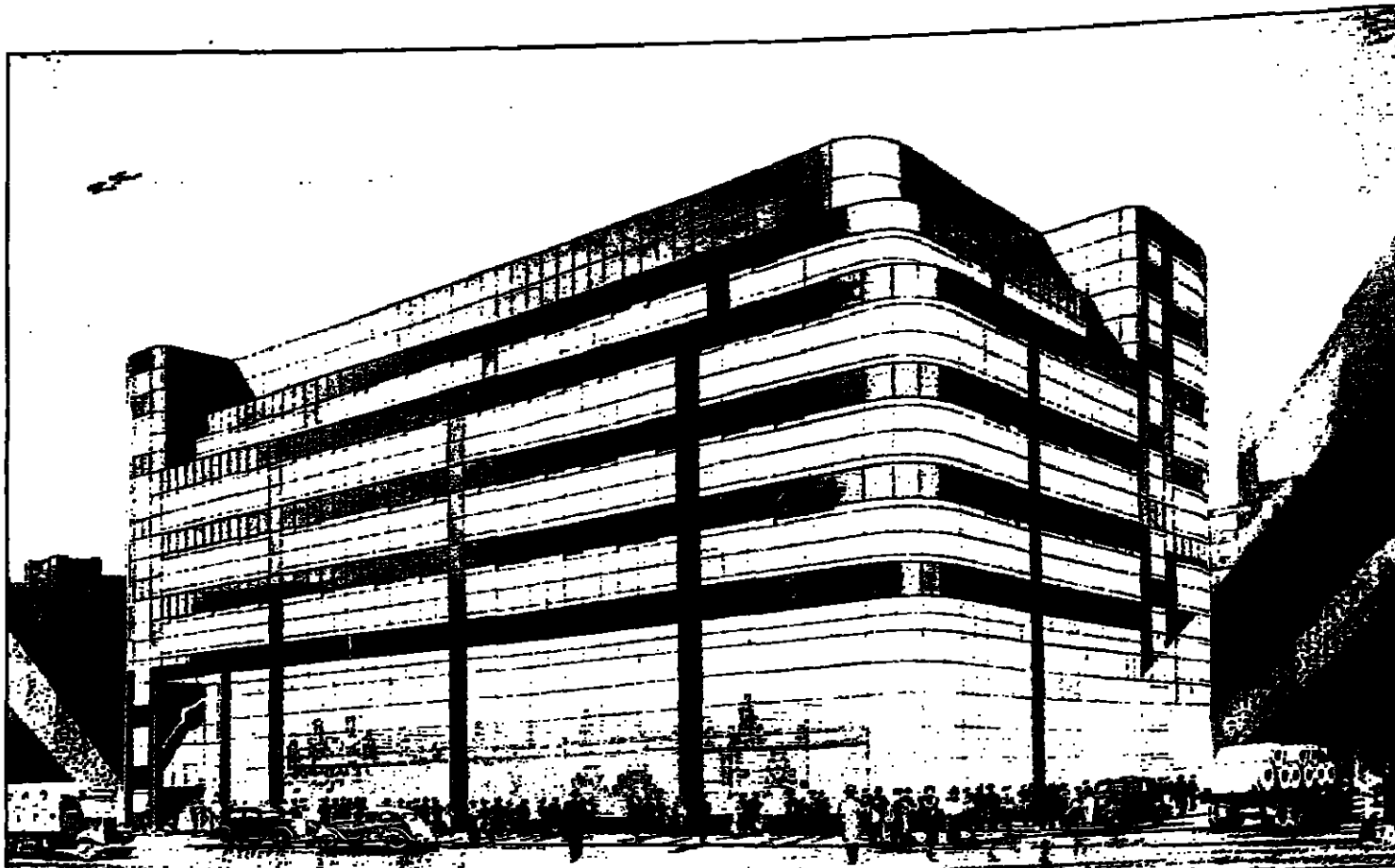
Modern Britain 1929-39: Design and Craft, sponsored by Bacon and Woodrow with *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*, supported by the Henry Moore Foundation, at the Design Museum, 20 Jan - 6 June (0171-378 6055)



Norman Foster and his working partner, Spencer de Grey

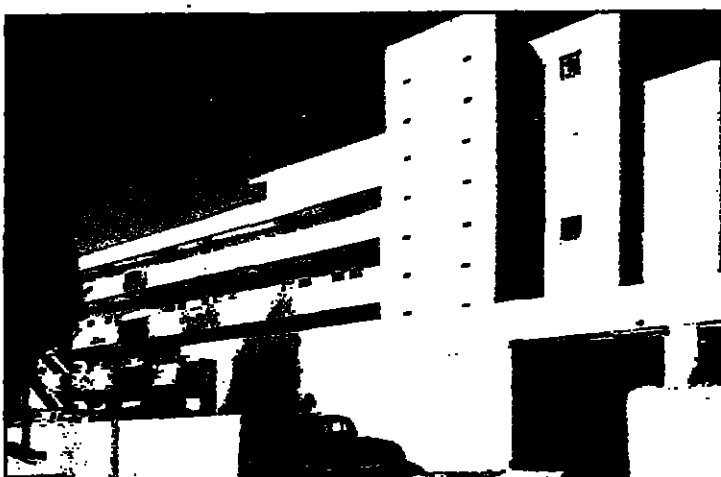
think Norman Foster would be too busy to bother with an exhibition which only lasts six months. Not at all. No job, it seems, is too small if it captures Norman's interest. He rattles off a list of small-ish jobs (under £3m) for the Spastics Association and Mental Health that have kept his 500-strong practice busy. "It's a good shot in the arm to have immediacy to create the instant environment that will be dismantled. Consider that Stansted airport took us 10 years, Bilbao Metro seven, Nimes arts centre also seven, and Duxford air museum, 11 years."

Inky black rectangles, amid Norman's distinctive loose freehand instructions, have just been faxed to Italy, showing a tray he designed for Alessi, the Italian stainless-steel-with-style manufacturers. Just how difficult it is to design a tray? Norman doesn't even smile. "A good tray has to be lipped to hold things. You need to consider how to open doors

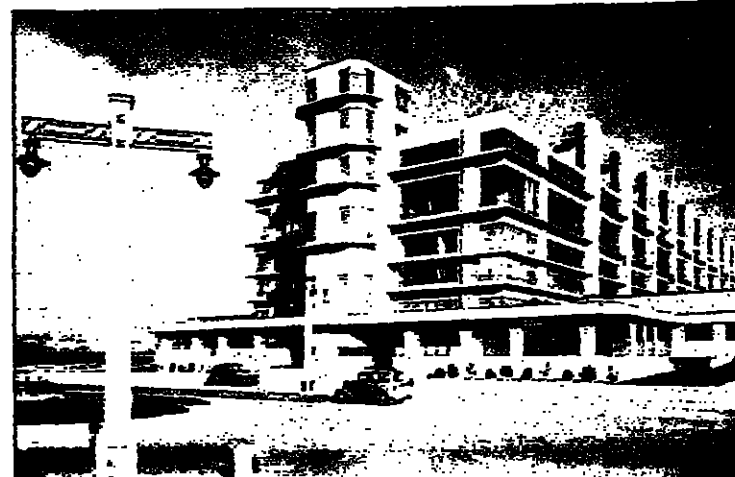


Norman Foster's five favourite British buildings

1. *Daily Express Building, Manchester, by Sir Owen Williams, 1939.* Sir Norman Foster says: "The first modern building I was aware of as a student at Manchester University. There is a link in its opaque glass skin with my Willis Faber and Dumas building in Ipswich, Suffolk."



2. *Boots Building, Beeston, Nottinghamshire, by Sir Owen Williams, 1932.* "Look at the reinforced concrete mushroom columns around Boots, a structural device given such joyous form in the modern workplace and, as such, the antithesis of Victorian gloom"



3. *Lawn Road Flats, Hampstead, London by Wells Coates 1934.* "Pioneering the international modern style as dwelling places. His flats were home to numerous influential architectural and literary émigrés fleeing the political turbulence in Europe"



4. *De la Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea, by Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff, 1934.* "De la Warr pavilion is a very good building, dynamic with its streamlined curves. The pure strain of European modernism in the UK by two émigrés"



5. *The Penguin Pool, London Zoo, by Berthold Lubetkin with Tecton, 1938.* "Not in my first four because it lacks a social dimension, but my partner, Spencer de Grey, wants the freely-moulded concrete pool to be included because of its sculptural qualities"

If it's post-modern, it has to be British

Thirties' artists believed that if you could do one thing in design, you could do everything. By Alan Powers

Whether it is really possible to "Go Modern and still Be British" is a question vexing quite a few people today. We may see the struggle going on - in the faces of elderly painters and young architects, manufacturers, shop windows, facades of buildings. So wrote the painter Paul Nash in 1932, encouraging his fellow Brits to take the plunge across the Channel to discover what "Being Modern" was all about.

Paul Nash is a good representative of the theory that went with Modernism in the Thirties, that if you could do one thing in design, you could do everything. He designed textiles, glassware, posters, books, even a spectacular bathroom for Tilly Losch, the dancer, although he remained first and foremost a painter.

His work in several of these fields is shown in

Modern Britain 1929-1939 at the Design Museum. If you want to know why the Design Museum is exhibiting some of the best examples of fine art produced in the Thirties, Nash's work helps to provide the answer.

Painters and sculptors, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Graham Sutherland, believed that they could become better engaged in the social issues of the time by creating an awareness of visual form and language.

The Design Museum has chosen to show what a *New Statesman*-reading intellectual in Hampstead would have had in his sitting-room. As the poet Stephen Spender wrote, the intelligentist was excited about "the idea that architecture, the design of rooms, and of the things within those rooms, could

alter people's lives". This desire to rebuild everything from the ground up was an essential part of the Modern.



From left: Tall Jar, The Bather, 1930; Shell advertising poster by Paul Nash; shield pattern Moquette fabric design for the seats on London Underground tube trains; the Bruton electric fire, 1939

The exhibition has sections devoted to Abbott's educational toys (some designed by the architect Ernő Goldfinger) as well as the enthusiasm for Health Centres. Most European countries developed Modernism in the Twenties, ahead of

Britain, in response to the need for reconstruction after the First World War. It was part of the rehabilitation which any therapist would recommend for a sick nation. For Nash, as for other painters, design was a way of beating the depression that had stopped people buying pictures.

In the Nineties, we have become fascinated with the idea of English national identity, but in the Thirties,

the search for essential Englishness had a modifying effect on Modernism, seen in artefacts produced for the 1937 Coronation, such as Eric Ravilious's commemorative Wedgwood mug, a reworking of the folk art tradition. Some critics have seen this as a compromise, but it was partly commercial pragmatism and partly a deeper understanding that Modernism is not so much a style

as a diagnostic method, the outcome of which cannot be predetermined.

If the exhibition offers any new interpretation of the period, it is to emphasise how, from 1935 onwards, Modernism in Britain was often more like Post-Modernism.

It was a conscious play with language and meaning, enjoying the ambiguity of double coding, as the architect Berthold Lubetkin did with his Penthouse at Highpoint II in 1938, where cow-hide chairs (two of which are in the exhibition), a mobile by Calder and a painting by Fernand Leger (also in the exhibition) held conversation with Victorian Pollock toy theatre prints pasted on the walls. Thus the paradox of "Going Modern and Being British" was resolved by mixing strong flavours together.

The use of design with technology could bring a better life to everyone, through plastics for radio cases, cheap printing for Penguin books and

artist-designed seating for the London Underground.

Modernism was no longer elitist or alarming, although only a minority wanted to buy into the whole package. In 1936, when Nikolaus Pevsner published *A Survey of Industrial Design*, he thought that 95 per cent of British goods were badly designed.



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MUSIC

Remix your television set

First there was the Portastudio. Then there was the home sampler. Now, there's VJamm, a box of tricks that allows you to mess with both sound and vision in your own bedsit... By Oliver Swanton

LYRIC SHEETS

MARTIN NEWELL

Adult Orientated Rock continues its takeover of the nation's airwaves. This morning, Melody Radio, London's easy-listening station becomes Magic 105.4. Critics fear that the rebranded station may become another outlet for artists already served by Virgin, Heart FM and Capital.

Walrus Radio



If all the jocks took fifty discs
And played them in rotation
Do you suppose, the Walrus said
We'd have a radio station?
"I think so," said the Carpenter
"With no imagination."

"But based on our assumption
That the public have cloth ears
If we play things like Simply Red
Late Stones and Tears For Fears
We may just get away with it
For years and years and years."

The Walrus slipped a jingle in
And played a recent hit
Then followed up with "Baker St"
To compensate for it
He turned round to the Carpenter
"See? Doesn't hurt a bit."

"A feast of eighties memories
Which we happened to acquire
A shovelful of chestnuts
On your glowing log-look fire
Ikea for the lugholes
Or a sonic remould tyre."

"That was Queen," the Walrus
parped
In transatlantic voice,
"For all you folk in listener-land
Who simply have no choice
Some car insurance rubbish now
Then something from Rose Royce."

"And if there are objections,"
Said the Carpenter, "So what?
They may not like the output
But our sponsor does... a lot
It helps to shift the product
Which is paying for his yacht."

Not all disc jockeys are created equal. Sir Jimmy Savile and the early hip-hop maestro Grand Master Flash are completely different animals. The former played records; the latter played with records - cutting, chopping and scratching them on twin turntables to produce new music from old vinyl. In the right hands a record-player can be a musical instrument, rather than a simple tool.

Consider now the pop music video; its function is to provide visual expression for a song scribbled on the back of a beer mat. The singer/songwriter and the video producer/director are separated not only by time, but also by work in different media. Video jockeys (VJs), however, treat audio and visual as one, cutting, chopping and scratching video samples together to produce new music and video from old footage. The song cannot pre-date the video because they are one and the same. Video music is a completely different animal.

Not everyone gets it. The MTV producer/director James Hyman has showcased much of the cutting-edge work on his show, *Party Zone*. The genre's true significance is largely lost on his bosses - and most of the twentysomething, trainer-clad MTV staff. It's no surprise. VJs like fast edits, and spinning, twirling, tripping computer graphic indents, too.

"Timber", a video music track produced by the London DJ duo Coldcut, was shortlisted at last year's Edinburgh Television and Film Festival in their top five music videos of the year. It did not star R Kelly, Oasis or Madonna, but buzzing chainsaws, chopping axes, falling trees and wailing Amazon Indians. Like "Timber", Coldcut's "Natural Rhythm" - starring croaking frogs, droning bees, hammering woodpeckers and splashing rain - was also put on heavy rotation on MTV.

That the head of music programming is unaware of the potential of this relatively unexplored genre does not matter, reckons Hyman: "Somewhere out there, there's a 15-year-old kid who is. Someone who's excited enough to go out and do his own tracks. He's going to have a field day," he says.

To that end Coldcut is releasing a video-sequencing computer software program, VJamm. The program allows the user to download video samples and trigger, mix and scratch them at the push of a button. So tomorrow's top-flight VJs can preview the concept first. A demo game version, pre-loaded with samples, is on the Internet and will be given away with Coldcut's remix LP, *Let Us Replay*.

With the rallying cry "Don't hate the media, be the media" Coldcut hope VJamm will inspire and empower



Coldcut turn their new digital manipulation techniques on themselves, above; below, their animated alter egos

others to pick up the gauntlet. "The time is now and I declare the game open," announces Coldcut's Matt Black. As with acid house, Black hopes that a new generation of bedroom boffins will devour the work of American pioneers such as Steinski, Mass Media and Emergency Broadcast Network (EBN) and make the genre their own, taking it to another level. "No one really invents this kind of shit," he considers: "It materialises out of the air and if you're awake, if you're paying attention, you're ready to play."

The time is right, reckons Black. And perhaps he should know. Inspired by the cut-and-pasters William Burroughs, Double D and Steinski and Grand Master Flash, Coldcut produced the UK's first sample-built record in 1987.

"Say Kids What Time Is It?" kicked the floodgates open for MARRS, Bomb The Bass, S-Express and the Beatmasters, providing sound-tracks for the first Summer of Love. Dance music's mutating vice-like grip on British youth culture ever since is a matter of historical record.

Since the New York hip-hop producer Steinski made *The Motorcade Sped On* - a scratch video using footage of the assassination of John F Kennedy - in 1984, computer technology has made the VJ's job an easier one. The laborious job of splicing tape has gone. Push-button creativity and digital manipulation are

now an affordable reality for any mid-range PC owner - VJamm will cost £30.

For more than 10 years Emergency Broadcast Network have produced video music in lieu of a video sampler. Tracks such as "We Will Rock You", a homage to Queen with George Bush on vocals and exploding hydrogen bombs on drums, have influenced chud-up people world-wide. In 1992 U2 invited EBN to join them on the Zooropa tour: as Zoo TV.

Coldcut's motto?
*'Don't hate the media,
be the media'*

and remix their *Numb* video. Like Coldcut, EBN haven't waited for industry to market a video sampler, but have devised their own. The video-sequencing computer program, written by EBN Design, was inspired by EBN: "We've been creating EBN video material for years now, in imitation of a video sampler - working as if we had one. Now we do. That enables us to play audio video from a piano or computer keyboard, allowing us to compose video just like music."

Any aspiring VJ planning to follow in EBN's footsteps should, however, be aware of some stumbling blocks. Despite Eighties optimism, pop videos are, at best, a marketing tool - at worst a tax write-off. VHS is a cumbersome, outdated format on which the public do not

want to own music. With the dvd revolution some years off the VJ will have to break fresh ground on new formats such as CD-Rom, or via the Internet. In the past EBN have resorted to practically giving away their videos on CD-Rom, together with their audio LPs.

The VJ works in a legal minefield, one that makes the music industry furore over sampling, copying, stealing look like a teddy bears' picnic. International conglomerates, politicians and, especially, celebrities will send their lawyers to the ends of the earth to protect their image. EBN claim that their work is a parody and therefore protected under the American Constitution. Although they've sidestepped many lawsuits it may only be a matter of time: fellow Americans Negativland recently lost a big case against Cassey Cassem. With few or no rights under existing UK law, budding British VJs will have to be content with browsing the shelves of Connoisseur Video in search of footage out of copyright.

Then, as if life weren't hard enough, at present the vast majority of the general public don't get it. Two years ago, when Coldcut first took live video music on tour, fans avidly watched them, heads bowed over laptops, rather than the 30-ft video screens. It wasn't until Coldcut erred at a gig in Toulouse, bringing the show to a

stuttering halt, that the audience cottoned on - watching them desperately trying to restart the show they finally realised that Coldcut were cutting, chopping and scratching video and music simultaneously. Coldcut now deliberately err during every gig.

Despite its history within club culture one avenue of exploration for aspiring VJs is the art world. In Sweden Lucky People Centre are acclaimed video artists and receive public funding from the Swedish Film Institute. Closer to home, VJs may be surprised by the warm reception they receive. During an interview for Channel 4's *Equinox* documentary, *Rave New World*, Matt Black was shooting his mouth about video music, demanding it be recognised as a valid and important form of modern art. Afterwards Coldcut were approached by the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art to do an exhibition. Not to be found wanting they devised an interactive VJ installation, *The Generator*. It was not only critically acclaimed, but was one of the gallery's most popular exhibits, played with by, among others, the Queen.

A demo version of VJamm is online at www.ninjabone.net. The full program will be at www.ninjabone.net from 26 Jan. Coldcut's remix LP *Let Us Replay*, with a demo version of VJamm, is released on Ninja Tune on 1 Feb.

Auto-destruction - anyway, anyhow, anywhere

"I FEEL as if I'm just a footnote tonight," was how Pete Townshend put it when he took to the floor to close an evening of music to mark the end of an exhibition by his mentor, Gustav Metzger, a conceptual artist best known for his auto-destructive art and for doing acidic light shows for The Who, Cream and others in the Sixties. As footnotes go, it was a splendid treat for the 80 members of the public who snatched up tickets on the basis of first come,

first served. In a spacious room lit by Metzger's vivid liquid-crystal projections, The Who's guitarist pulled a surprise by performing a short set heavy on classics, opening with a lengthy treatment of "Won't

Get Fooled Again", and including stirring takes on "Substitute", "Anyway Anyhow Anywhere" and "Drowned".

As Townshend proved at two recent gigs in London at the end of last year, he has redeveloped a love of playing live, and the set was punctuated with gushing anecdotes about Metzger and the preceding acts, particularly Alison David. Playing with three backing musicians, the singer with the crossover

dance crew Red Snapper embarked on a classic showcase set to reveal an extraordinary voice. She's particularly skin-pricking when accompanied just by guitar, but also proved worthy on upbeat numbers embracing blues, R&B, jazz and gospel.

Townshend promised the crowd that she'd be singing with him in the near future, and another name that will surely crop up again is the unsigned guitar-playing soul Londoner Hacker, a singer/songwriter

who does not wallow in self-pity. While Alison David has the voice, he has the songs: material such as the upbeat "Deviation", which marks this regular on the capital's acoustic circuit as a little English soulmate for Elliott Smith, no less.

The main band of the evening were Oxford's The Egg, who are known for playing a continuous live dance set. Their sound-check perturbed the 73-year-old Metzger, who thought they might be too loud and

take away from his projections, which he had planned to be suitable for meditation as well as a backdrop to the live music. The Egg's opening numbers cut a fine and funky atmospheric feel with the audience continuing to stretch out on the gallery floor. When the band dropped in their current single, "Getting Away With It", an addictive slab of pop reminiscent of the Pet Shop Boys without the kitsch, the floor filled with dancers. It stayed that way

as they moved towards a closing housey brace of tunes, "Bends" and "Ambassador". With their 16mm projections they achieved a superb interface of visual and audio, even though Townshend joked that it was antiquated technology compared to what he and Metzger were doing in 1966. That was just another footnote in an unconventional night that was nonetheless an early contender for gig of the year.

TIM PERRY

LIVE

THE EGG AND
PETE TOWNSHEND
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
OXFORD

RIFFS

THE FIRST AND LAST RECORDS BOUGHT BY LONNIE DONEGAN

First Record
Josh White: "The House of the Rising Sun"
IT IS simpler than The Animals' cover, very straightforward and emotional. It's a song telling of a real experience Josh had, about a brothel in New Orleans. I prefer Josh's version. Always the original, the creative.

This was the first American folk song I heard and the experience kicked off my career, starting me singing American blues and folk. I believe that Josh White started the British rock scene.

After all, most rock bands came from copying me and the skiffle genre. So, in fact, all this came from Josh White.



He had a hit record with "One Meat Ball", a bizarre ditty that wasn't his normal material at all. It was weird for a blues singer to be in the charts. No one had heard of American folk singers; hardly anyone had seen a black man and you wouldn't see a guitar on stage in England - or if you did you automatically thought it was music from Spain.

Last record
Shana Morrison: "Shana Morrison"
I LIVE in Lake Tahoe, California, and when my wife and my three boys went there in August to renew our marriage vows (all very emotional and soppy), my son noticed in the local paper a concert featuring a young lady called Shana Morrison. She turned out to be, as I suspected, the daughter of Van Morrison (later Van told me she doesn't want to hang on to Dad's coat-tails). We went to this concert at the top of a ski lift on a 1,000-ft mountain and it was a fabulous performance by this beautiful, fairy-like creature. In the interval I rushed up and bought the

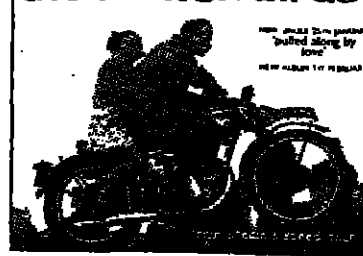
album, and we are now hoping to work together on a live tour.

She has a group and writes her own material; it's semi-poetic, very like her dad, but veering more towards American country. Van veers to British rock. Visually she is gorgeous - nothing like her father; she dances and has great stage presence. She is what the trade needs - a natural. I would like to do a concert with all three of us - Van Morrison, Lonnie Donegan and Shana Morrison. Well, you have to dream.

INTERVIEW BY
JENNIFER RODGER

Lonnie Donegan's new album, *Muleskinner Blues*, is on *Capitol RCA*

the mutton birds



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THIS WEEK'S ALBUM RELEASES

REVIEWED BY ANDY GILL



THE BLACK CROWES
By Your Side
Columbia

THE BEST rock music, from the Stones to the Ramones, has often been made by smart guys acting dumb. So, too, with the Black Crowes, who on *By Your Side* have elected to abandon the ill-advised psychedelic pretensions of *Three Snakes And One Charm* in favour of gloriously dumb, riff-strewn R&B, their natural mode. Let's face it, choruses don't get much dumber than that of "Heavy", which finds Chris Robinson all but lost for words to convey his affection, settling for the questionable compliment, "I just want you to stay/ You're so heavy".

Personnel changes - a new bassist and the loss of a second guitarist - have left the Crowes' sound tighter and more focused; the immediate impact, on "Go Faster", is of streamlined, kick-ass

rock'n'roll, the likes of which the Stones long since forgot how to capture. There's also more room for Eddie Hirsch's keyboards to interact with Rich Robinson's guitar on Southern soul-styled songs like "Diamond Ring" and "By Your Side".

There are signs of a change in the band's freewheeling attitude, too, with the anti-drug song "HorseHead" and "Go Faster" itself suggesting a cleaner, leaner Crowes than before. It's not completely clear-eyed sobriety in the Crowes camp, though, judging by the party-time sentiment of the rollicking "Welcome To The Goodtimes", where the Dirty Dozen Brass Band adds a little New Orleans spice to the pot. The overall result is the band's best record since *American*, and maybe further back than that.

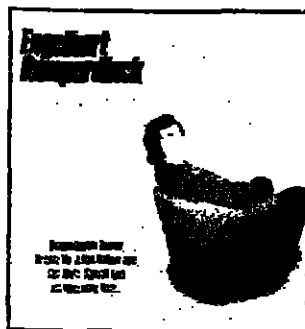


COLIN REID
Colin Reid
Weevil

WHEN NO less an authority than Bert Jansch claims that a guitarist reminds him of "myself and John Renbourn fused together", we had better sit up and take notice. He's not wrong, either: on the strength of this debut album, Belfast's Colin Reid is a name to add to the illustrious tradition of British and Irish fingerstyle players that includes Davy Graham and Dick Gaughan alongside the former Pentanglists.

His ability is simply outstanding, whether he's letting casual shafts of harmonics shine through a tune like "Clear Blue Light", or tackling the knuckle-knotting technical demands of a piece like Marcel Dadi's "Bluefinger" with a playful whimsicality that betrays hours of dedicated practice.

Reid's own material, by comparison, runs the gamut from expansive displays of technique, such as the aptly-titled "Francis", to more moody and reflective pieces like "Casting Shadows" and "Table For One", though all possess the immediate familiarity of standards. Both as performer and composer, he is a huge talent.



ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK
The Dance Album
The Hit Label

AFTER BIG beat, here's Butlin Beat: the terrifying sound of enforced communal jollity, pounded out without a smidgen of shame by ruthless music-industry chancers convinced that they can do for Engelbert what Trevor Horn (almost) did for Tom Jones. The producers Chris Cox, Barry Harris & Jeff Johnson are the Frankensteins delivering a massive jolt of electricity to the crooner's all-but-least hits, a task they pursue with a glee more akin to the Doctor's troll-like assistant, Igor.

Songs such as "The Last Waltz" and "A Man Without Love" are taken at a furious mechanical gallop that renders them rather more suggestive of Engelbert having a right old knees-up than drowning in his own lonely tears, as the lyrics claim. The monster Humperdinck, once roused, performs with commendable restraint, but there's really no salvaging a reputation once it has bent the knee to such excesses of camp. And after the way Cox, Harris & Johnson have subjected his hits to cheesy disco-synth riffs that even Daft Punk might consider too obvious, that's all he deserves.



TQ
They Never Saw Me Coming
Epic

YOU DON'T expect to deal with rocket scientists in hip-hop, but even so, there are some moments of breathtaking stupidity on this debut album from TQ, aka Terence Quaites.

TQ's thing is to blend the smooth, porno-soul style of modern R&B with the mind-set of rap - not necessarily a stupid aim in itself, but it's one that offers the young singer enough beartrap-sized pitfalls to plunge into. I'm sure, for instance, that the young lady fatally caught in drive-by crossfire in the supposedly true story "Bye Bye Baby" would consider the ensuing grisly revenge tale "The Comeback" to be a lovely, touching tribute to her memory. And the familiar request to wave your guns in the air is delivered with a queasy sensuality that suggests TQ's relationship with his rod is somewhat closer than might be expected.

The end result is simply to bring the style and sound of erotic soul to criminality, making cold, contemptible business the apparent object of deep emotion. Which, from an ethical standpoint, rather puts David Cronenberg's *Crush* in its place.

SLEEVE NOTES

WILL THE Spice Girls continue to rule the airwaves? Only in divided form, it would seem... The quasi-chanteuse Mel B is preparing for a solo album, with Mary J Blige and the Artist (formerly known as blah blah blah) rumoured to be on the recording docket. Ashley Newton, president of Virgin Records, could not confirm any collaborations, but said that everyone who had been approached had replied with a resounding "yes".

DISTRIBUTION VIA cyberspace is the preferred choice of the rappers Public Enemy. The group, long-standing supporters of Web distribution, have split from Def Jam and announced that they will release their next album on the Internet. The Public Enemy website is using the successor to the MP3 digital delivery format, MP4, and includes Chuck D comparing the music industry's Secure Digital Music Initiative with slavery.

NOT THAT the Internet will long be an idyllic place. Starting this month, "street teams" will be blasting off into cyberspace. In other words, Loud Records' marketing people will be breaking into chat rooms and websites and promoting their artists. "Now [we] can bomb the Internet," said Randy Weiner, Loud Records' executive producer for new media. Street teams have helped turn Loud artists such as the Wu-Tang Clan and Big Punisher into some of hip hop's biggest stars.

AS IN film, so in music. Not. The music label DreamWorks, a spin-off from the Spielberg company, is fast getting a reputation as the label that encourages creative spark over commercial success, with its label poster artists such as Elliott Smith and the Eels topping best-of lists without any sales-related headlines.

THE LONDON dance station Kiss 100FM is rumoured to be following the loss of 18 employees, including its best-known presenter, Steve Jackson, with changes to its specialist slant. Will it go the same way as Xfm? No, says Simon Sadler, head of music, who is eager to counter claims of a move to make Kiss pop-oriented. The changes have seen classics reintroduced, underground dance music removed and more computer-selected music in late night/ early morning slots.

JENNIFER RODGER

I'M SURE I SAW THEM ON A POSTER...

A REGULAR ROUND-UP OF BANDS YOU WON'T HAVE SEEN ON 'TOP OF THE POPS'

SOMETIMES THERE'S nothing more invigorating than a dose of adolescent attitude, and the US underground act Pulley were brimming with it. They urged their fans to steal their new single to avoid getting ripped off and hardly batted an eyelid when a gaggle of crowd-surfers invaded the stage, leaving a trail of trampled mike stands and cymbals in their wake.

Their set consisted of turbulent three-minute tracks littered with power-punk chords, fierce vocals and furious

drumming that echoed the ramraid hardcore of Biohazard, Downset and Dog Eat Dog. And despite the thin crowd, they appeared to be having the time of their lives as they giggled among themselves on stage and mercilessly ribbed the Identikit skateboarders at the front. Pulley's real strength lay in their exceedingly charismatic singer. He had clearly taken a leaf out of Henry Rollins's book: standing with his legs apart and his broad torso bent double so that his chin stroked the ground

PULLEY
GARAGE, LONDON

MIKA BOMB
BARFLY, LONDON

BELLATRIX
BARFLY, LONDON

while he sang. And, in the vein of Rollins's inclement humour, he launched a tirade against the

simpering groupies that had his fans gaping in dumb admiration and begging for more.

The all-girl Japanese outfit Mika Bomb managed to stun the audience into silence. They came across like a bunch of teenagers playing rock-star pranks at a girlie sleep-over. Listening to a girl with the voice of an eight-year-old singing about her underwear proved a deeply uncomfortable experience and sent most of the men in the audience scurrying to the bar in shame.

Judging by the turnout, the Icelandic five-piece Bellatrix are destined for great things. They embody all the components of a successful Nineties band, with tracks scrupulously designed to slot into every genre, from folk and psychedelia to retro-kitsch and house. They advocate rough-edged, post-Britpop fretwork, fleshing it out with plinky-plonky keyboards, house rhythms and spooky violins. What rescued them from the brink of corporate blandness was their kooky bottle-blonde

singer whose vocals could rival Polly Harvey's in force and versatility. The fact that she is trained as an opera singer accounted for her impressive lung capacity, though her melodramatic poses and quirky dancing suggested a stint at drama school as well. A clutch of strong melodies and an alluring vocalist may well secure staying power for Bellatrix. But real musical credibility? Not until they have the confidence to create a more distinctive sound.

FIONA STURGES

The icicle thieves

Mercury Rev made the rock album of 1998. But somehow the glory that was *Deserter's Songs* did not translate to the Newcastle stage. By Andrew Mueller



The Revs: perhaps it's time they resigned themselves to the life of the studio

MERCURY REV'S reappearance was one of the more pleasant surprises of 1998. That it came accompanied by one of the year's best albums was a bonus. For those of us who remember witnessing the chaos that was a Mercury Rev performance circa 1991, the arrival of last year's subtle, accomplished *Deserter's Songs* was scarcely less startling than the discovery of a lost battalion of Marines still doggedly maintaining a garrison in Two Jima.

Deserter's Songs has been acclaimed in many quarters as the album of 1998. It's a distinction it deserves, even if, given the current global rock recession it is an accolade equivalent to being named Mauritanian Tobogganer of the Year. In fact it has an aura

of genuine greatness about it, managing to sound something like several other great American rock bands - the Beach Boys and the Band in particular - but mostly like nothing you've ever heard.

It's also an album that sounds as if it's going to lose something in the translation when played live, and at Newcastle Riverside the group managed only to confirm this impression. The album is distinguished by an essential fragility, as if it is being phoned in from the snow-bound tent of some lost Arctic explorer. It's hard to imagine how it could possibly be replicated in a crowded beer hall, but what Mercury Rev do clearly isn't the way to go about it.

The Mercury Rev of old didn't care less about the re-

lationship of their live show to their recorded work. The band back then were a volatile mix of personalities who agreed on nothing at all, least of all on when their songs should end. Much like chucking several unpredictable chemicals into a test-tube and shaking the results, while often disastrous, were always spectacular.

These days, only two of Mercury Rev in fact tour - the guitarists Jonathon Donahue and Sean "Grasshopper" Mackowiak. While their band-mates stay at home in upstate New York, their places are taken by friends. Donahue and Mackowiak have both said that things generally have been more stable since the departure of the original lead singer and noted eccentric David Baker, and they're right,

but things, at least on stage, are a good deal less interesting. Songs such as "Holes" and "Tonight It Shows", which are both as fragile and beautiful as icicles on the record, sound like grim low-fi ordinaire, impossible to tell apart from the baleful indie dishwater that is served up by any number of lesser rock groups.

It's great to have Mercury Rev back, especially on the sort of form they display on the album. But at their showing in Newcastle, they could do a lot worse than resign themselves to being a studio concern only. On stage, Mercury Rev didn't accomplish anything. On record, they sound as though they are out there somewhere past rock'n'roll, and as if nothing is beyond them.

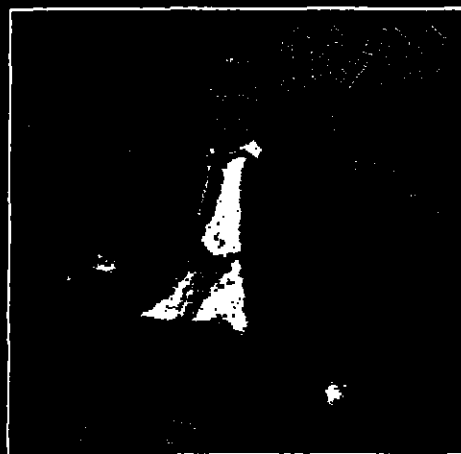
On tour to 21 Jan



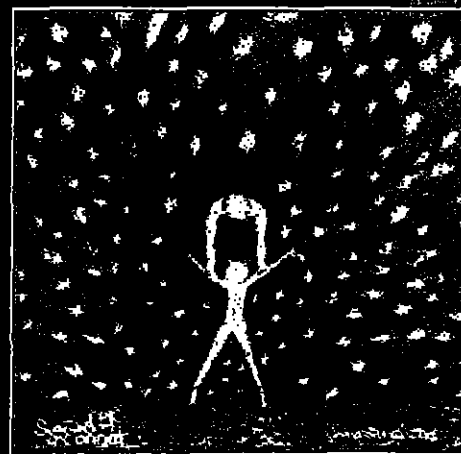
David Bowie 'Scream'



David Bowie 'Lodger'



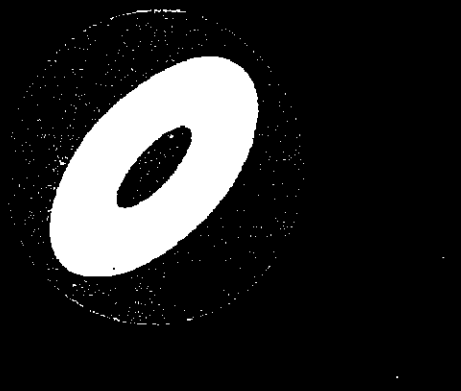
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Bach by the numbers

Rosalyn Tureck deconstructs the composer's work with mathematical precision. How else to reveal the passion and beauty?

SIGHT READINGS



MICHAEL CHURCH

REVERED BY Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin; hailed by Schoenberg as the first 12-tone composer; embroidered by jazzmen, and played on every instrument under the sun – surely Bach needs no defence today? Oh yes he does, replies Rosalyn Tureck: he's trivialised and traduced as never before. To reinforce the point, she presses into my hand *An Introduction to the Performance of Bach* (book one of three), then follows it with a daunting clutch of essays by mathematicians, biologists and musicologists (*Journal of the Tureck Bach Research Foundation*) which include a rumination of her own entitled "Musical Authenticity: Is It a Legitimate Offspring of Janus?" Your starter for 10.

There are people who regard this doughty octogenarian as a pedant, but nobody writes her off as a crank. Two reasons to take her seriously have just hit the record shops: a CD of Bach's monumental *Goldberg Variations* (Deutsche Grammophon), and a CD of his *Partitas* (Philips Great Pianists of the 20th Century). For this Chicago-born Russian of Turkish extraction is not only a great pianist, but an astonishingly consistent one: while the variations were recorded last year, the *Partitas* were laid down in the Fifties, and both are characterised by the same marmoreal clarity. You'd almost say they emerged from the same session.

In one of her essays, she likens a musical score to a flower, with analysis being the process of its systematic dismemberment, "in order to earn what makes up the full-blown flower as an entity". She quotes with approval Debussy's definition of music as "the arithmetic of sounds". This, she says, is the stark, demystified reality of creative art. For 70 years she has been fixated on Bach, who belonged to a society promoting music as "sounding mathematics".

The trigger for this fixation was a sudden, blinding insight. "A week before my 17th birthday I was playing a particularly dense and complicated fugue, and I went into a



'All good scientists are artists, and vice versa,' says Rosalyn Tureck. 'They breathe the same oxygen'

trance. How long it lasted, I don't know; but when I came to, I knew I'd seen both the multi-levelled structure of the concept, and the technique required to fulfil it. Like Alice, I'd gone through a small door into an infinite green universe, and I wanted to stay in that universe for ever." She has done just that.

The new technique was both simple and exceptionally difficult, demanding that the player abandon the notion of right hand/ left hand opposition – melody versus harmony – on which classical music is largely based. Bach was thus put in line with

Boulez and the serialists, and an entire performing tradition was overturned. "At first, I was as clumsy as a baby," says Tureck. "It took me three days to do four lines. But as my fingers absorbed my vision, it gradually got faster. Each finger had to be absolutely independent, to bring out all the parts evenly, without a trace of muddiness." Bach, she believes, should not be thought of in linear terms: the connections are vertical and diagonal, not merely horizontal. "There's a density in him, where everything is simultaneous." If you listen at random to

either of the new recordings, you will instantly get the point.

You'll also notice another striking difference from other recordings of this music: very little pedal, and 57 varieties of staccato. For as Tureck herself observes: "There's only one kind of legato: if the notes are connected, they're connected. But if they're staccato – if the notes are detached – the possible nuances are endless. Sometimes my fingers are playing with four different detached touches at once."

Which brings us to her most celebrated imitator, the egregious

Glenn Gould. Tureck's records, wrote Gould, reflected "playing of such uprightness, to put it in the moral sphere. There was such a sense of repose that had nothing to do with languor, but rather with moral rectitude in the liturgical sense." When I ask whether she will now return the compliment, she hesitates – "That's a pointed question!" – and then delivers a put-down so graceful that I'm glad Gould didn't live to hear it. "He picked up the principle, but he didn't understand it. I don't just do it for variety, to keep the ear enthralled" – this said

with lip-curling contempt. "He was talented and clever; but his idiosyncrasies were the result of a desperate desire to be noticed. I can't approve." Then she adds a *coup de grâce*. "Idiosyncratic playing has nothing to do with art."

It's always a mistake to ask one sacred monster to appreciate the eccentric virtues of another; Gould's glorious intensity inhabits a different planet. So what other pianists does she like? A pause, a sigh: hers is, I realise, a very big ego. Should all aspiring pianists read her treatises, and apply them to every piece of

Bach? "Of course. If they're serious." But it's fantastically laborious! "So? Who said art was anything else? Everyone today says enjoy. Enjoy means don't work, don't feel too deeply, don't think too hard, don't take any responsibility. Is that how you're going to spend your life?" I retreat to the back of the class.

But I sense, all the same, that she's a good teacher, and not just because of her declared reluctance to develop an army of little Turecks. It may sound finicky to devote three decades to the study of ornamentation *per se*, but her records reveal the structural strengths that lie in Bach's trills and appoggiaturas, when these are properly handled. For example, the *Goldberg Variations*, she says, are "a monument to one of the greatest minds that ever lived, with all its passion and beauty and humour".

Her Oxford home is stuffed with tapestries, paintings, and exotic instruments, but great minds are her preferred milieu. She was a teenage groupie of electronic-music pioneer Leon Theremin; Bertrand Russell, Isaiah Berlin, and atom-bomb inventor Robert Oppenheimer were among her friends; the scientists who share her symposia are leaders in their fields. "All good scientists are artists, and vice versa," she says as a parting shot. "They breathe the same oxygen."

MICHEL PETRUCCI lives! Yes, he may have died last week, aged 36, but this week sees the release of his latest CD, which reinforces his already solid status as a jazz immortal. *Petrucci Solo Live* (FDM 36597-8) bears the fruits of a wild session in Frankfurt, and has all the hallmarks – large structures, high fancy, sinewy strength – with which his fans will be familiar; one marvels yet again that so diminutive a pianist should be able to create so big a sound. For Petrucci, who suffered (atrociously and heroically) from glass bone disease and had to use special stirrups to operate the pedals, was just 3ft tall, and too disabled to walk.

Everything about him was extraordinary, and so was my encounter with him at a London hotel. For 20 minutes he held forth on his friends, heroes and family, propping himself up between a low table and a chair. Then a fire alarm went off, followed by an order to evacuate. "OK, let's get the fuck out of here!" he shouted. We were on the 11th floor, and were told that lifts were out of bounds and that we'd have to walk. He refused all offers of help, choosing to lower himself painfully step by step all the way to the ground. Then, in great good humour, he carried on where he'd left off.

THE COMPACT COLLECTION

ROB COWAN ON THE WEEK'S NEW CD RELEASES

GIVEN THE right exposure, Anne Sofie von Otter's *Lamenti* could rocket through the charts the way Götsche Three did six years ago. The delicious contrast between von Otter's sensually alluring mezzo and the spiky sonorities of the period-instrument Musica Antiqua Köln creates an almost tangible frisson, especially in Monteverdi's two languorous laments (the longest being the one that Ariadne sings for Theseus). Reinhard Goebel spices the vocal mix with a delightful "Corrente Nona" by Legrenzi, while Piccini's Chaconne (a lute solo) precedes the closing item, Purcell's gently spiralling "Oh solitude!" Goebel brings his usual pungency and rhythmic verve to Vivaldi's cantata "Cessate, omai cessate" and the programme also includes an attractive but little-known "Lament for the Queen of England" by Antonio Bertali.

Anyone who enjoys an in-store encounter with this marvellous CD is unlikely to leave without purchasing a copy.

Rarer even than Bertali's "Lament" is the 23-minute "The Birth of Venus" by Gabriel Fauré, lyrical music with a mystical aspect and some quietly virtuosic piano writing, presented under the direction of Bernard Tétu in its original version for soloists and mixed chorus. EMI's World Premiere recording shares a generous programme with some of Fauré's best-loved songs, including "Après un rêve", "Au cimetière" and "Les Berceuses", as well as the popular *Pavane* (in a version for mixed chorus and piano) and a reconstruction of the original score – where mixed voices are supported by organ and string quintet – of the *Cantique de Jean Racine*.

Fauré's youthful music melds the influences of Mendelssohn and Schumann, though the spring-like aroma of his best scores remains inimitable. Tétu employs a skilful team of relative unknowns, plus his own Solistes de Lyon – Bernard Tétu and the pianist Jean-Claude Penneret. An enchanting programme, sympathetically realised in spacious sound.

Both discs have a calming power, unlike Olli Mustonen's challenging sequence of ancient and modern preludes and fugues. At first glance, I thought that Bach and Shostakovich might share strictly alternating tracks; but no, Mustonen cleverly juxtaposes longer sequences, first by one composer, then by the other. Mustonen is a genuine original: he darts, hops, dances and races across the keys with a digital dexterity that recalls Glenn Gould. His provocative playing style is matched by a rare intelligence, something you sense from the way he varies the silences between sequences – sewing a Shostakovich prelude to the tail of a Bach fugue, or letting things rest for a while longer than usual.

If you do not already know Shostakovich's astonishingly varied *Preludes and Fugues*, then this should serve as an ideal introduction. Mustonen takes 12 preludes and fugues from Book 1 of Bach's *The Well-tempered Clavier* and mixes them among 12 out of 24 by Shostakovich. RCA's bright sound-frame fits the playing like a well-tailored glove.

Lamenti von Otter: Archiv Produktion 457 617-2
Fauré/Tétu: EMI CDC5 56728 2
Bach, Shostakovich/Mustonen: RCA 74321 61446 2 (two CDs)

A shimmering celestial vision for cello

THE INDEFATIGABLE Rostropovich attracted a huge crowd to the Barbican on Wednesday. Another sold-out concert for the London Symphony Orchestra which, for some time, has been on a winning streak. Who says the audience for classical music is dying out? But it is the judicious mix that guarantees the crowd – a configuration of classical music, a great soloist and something unusual.

That has been the strength of LSO programming. Rostropovich has done more to change the face of cello repertoire this century than any other cellist (Casals's record in commissioning is pretty dismal and Emanuel Feuermann's virtually non-existent). Rostropovich's goal

is to commission 100 concertos. In his early days, the greatest composers of the time – Shostakovich, Britten – wrote for him. Now, composers of his own age and a younger generation, scurry to write for him. But is there a hint of megalomania to this commissioning urge? How often do we hear repeat performances of more than a handful of works from this vast treasure trove that has come into being in just the past 20 years?

Clearly, the tawdry of living talent is uneven, but it was something of an ear-opener to hear Wednesday's catch. Alongside two "classical" (albeit for their times "neo-classical") concertos by Saint-Saëns (his A minor) and Tchaikovsky this

CLASSICAL

ROSTROPOVICH/LSO
BARBICAN, LONDON

"Rococo" Variations). The *Canticle of the Sun* by Sofia Gubaidulina received its UK premiere. It's a long work – 45 minutes – and in its slow pacing it felt even longer. But the score is intriguing, not least in its successful bid to allow the soloist to be heard through the crowd.

Gubaidulina has written extensively for cello and is supremely experienced in dealing with this issue, but surely this scoring must be her most original: two percussionists playing a vast array of instruments from wine glasses to tubular bells

via timpani, marimbaphone, vibraphone, glockenspiel, plate bells, antique cymbals and large tam-tam, plus celeste and a chamber choir comprising a half dozen sopranos, altos, tenors and basses. The mix is magical and extremely canny. Upward glissandi, tremolo harmonies, wide leaping intervals, characterise the solo part as an insistent semitonal movement characterises much of the vocal line.

Many of Gubaidulina's works carry an extra musical dimension, frequently a response to mystical ideas and Christian symbolism. By taking the text of the "Canticle of the Sun" by St Francis of Assisi, Gubaidulina means to reflect the sunny personality of Rostropovich.

But not much sun comes over – more a largely subdued argument, thin in texture, that purports to underlie "the glorification of the Creator and His Creation by a very humble, simple Christian friar".

Towards the end, the cellist abandons his instrument for the delightful sounds of the flexatone, bowing it in a display like some latter-day Papageno. And who could forget the shimmering echoes of those musical glasses? Neil Percy and Simon Carrington were the deft percussionists with John Alvey on celesta. London Voices provided excellent vocal support while the conductor, Ryszard Muzak, successfully held proceedings together.

ANNETTE MORREAU

ON THE AIR

BAYAN NORTHCOTT

TUCKED AWAY late night on Saturdays and Mondays on Radio 3, Robert Dawson-Scott is inviting a succession of composers and performers to "revisit a major musical challenge" in a half-hour series called *At the Foot of the Mountain*.

Last weekend he had Anthony Payne reflecting on the complexities of elaborating the sketches for Elgar's Third Symphony, and on that belated work's almost non-plussing impact world-wide since its premiere last February.

No doubt nostalgia and the continuing backlash against Modernism have played their part in its rapid acceptance. Moreover, Elgar's idiom is already loved – never more so than today, as Payne observed – whereas a new work by a modern composer has to create the conditions for its understanding as it goes along. And, of course, as Payne could not observe, his empathy for Elgar's idiom and creative skill in simulating his characteristic procedures is, quite possibly, unique. Indeed, so close was his identification

with Elgar that, as he told Dawson-Scott, he knew he would never escape the thrill unless he threw himself into a new piece of his own the moment he had heard the first run-through of the completed Elgar.

Performers, on the other hand, cannot identify too closely with the score, and it was fascinating to have the opportunity – as I did – to follow Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra developing, from the first run-through, by way of the recording sessions and first private performance, the seemingly comprehensive account of the work they offered at the public premiere: impetuous, volatile, elegiac and stoically noble. It was even more fascinating to hear how differently that most versatile of our younger conductors, Martyn Brabbins, and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra projected the piece in their Glasgow performance last autumn, broadcast in *The BBC Orchestras* slot on Radio 3 on Monday.

Where Davis's opening was fiercely driven, Brabbins's was massive, granitic; where Davis took the second subject with an affectionate forward flow, Brabbins was lingering and autumnal. And so it went: in the finale especially, compared with the chivalric panoply of Davis, Brabbins adopted an almost dangerously steady tempo, as if risking all on Payne's inspired clinching gesture, a tragic march-past and fade modelled on "The Wagon Passes" in Elgar's late *Nursery Suite*. Where Davis made of this a final burst of heroic defiance, Brabbins generated the crushing gravity of a funeral cortège.

Yet these differences suggest a deeper reason why audiences have responded so gratefully to Payne's Elgarian recension. Although the 20th century is widely supposed to have witnessed the liberation of the rhythmic dimension of music from the constraints of 19th-century tradition, the reverse is arguably true: vast tracts of today's music, "classical" and pop, are locked into unvaried, mechanistic pulses – the very engine, you may think, of co-



Andrew Davis, who conducted the premiere of Elgar's Third

cive consumer culture. In 19th-century Romanticism you often find, by contrast, leading melodies, harmonies and supporting bass lines simultaneously unfolding at different rhythmic rates against a background pulse that may itself be varied according to expressive

need. And it is precisely this multi-layered rhythmic flexibility, so subtly exploited by Elgar and emulated by Payne, that helps to explain how the Third Symphony is already yielding interpretations contrasting with yet complementary to those of Davis and Brabbins.

NEW FILMS

BUTTONERS (KNOFLIKARI) (NC)

Director: Petr Zelenka
Starring: Jiri Kodel, Borjov Navratil
Skipping without warning from pre-Bomb Hiroshima to the present-day Czech Republic, Zelenka's curious little portmanteau piece dovetails a set of six short-stories, some wacky, some sad and all implicitly concerned with notions of forgiveness, community and social tolerance. Inevitably, *Buttoners* is a mixed bag, saddled with some duff Forties period details plus a smattering of awkward, amateur-night performances. Still, no matter: Zelenka's droll good-humour and airy idiosyncrasies ensure his film is emphatically more treat than trick. **West End: ICA Cinema.**

DOBERMANN (18)

Director: Jan Kounen
Starring: Vincent Cassel, Tcheky Karyo
Vincent Cassel's born-to-be bad gangster struts and sneers his way through a gleamingly abstracted Paris. Tcheky Karyo's bad-egg cop looks on balefully. Big guns go off, red sports cars cruise down open freeways, and lily-livered bystanders blub like babies. So this is what the new French cinema is all about: endless stylised carnage and iconic posing, plus a script that's going nowhere fast. Kounen's *en-plein-visage* actioner comes with the thumbprints of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Luc Besson* all over it - but there's no wit, no urgency - no nothing, really, beyond a few neat set-pieces and lots of gurning overacting. Kounen goes a bundle on sudden zooming close-ups. **West End: Clapham Picture House, Metro, Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero.**

MEET JOE BLACK (15)

Director: Martin Brest
Starring: Brad Pitt, Anthony Hopkins
Picking his way through Brest's under-developed overhaul of 1934's *Death Takes a Holiday* goes Brad Pitt's aquiline Grim Reaper, who gets charpered round the everyday

delights of Planet Earth by Anthony Hopkins's dying billionaire. The introductions complete. Brest throws in a romance (between Pitt and Claire Forlani's soulful debutant), a few air-brushed life-lessons, then leaves his tale to drift along for close on three hours. So while *Meet Joe Black* has a few neat themes, and a reliably solid turn from Hopkins, it's too much a picture of disparate pieces, each played out to their individual lengthy agendas, with no glue in the middle, just vapour. **West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero.**

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18)

Director: Don Roos
Starring: Christina Ricci, Martin Donovan
See *The Independent Recommends, right.* **West End: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End.**

SOUR GRAPES (15)

Director: Larry David
Starring: Craig T. Nelson, Steven Weber
TV wisdom has it that *Seinfeld* slumped after co-creator David bailed out of the show. Trouble is, the man's feature-length writing-directing effort is no great shakes: a *Seinfeldian* comedy of urban neuroses hinging on the familial spat between Craig Bierko's jackpot winner and the cousin (Steven Weber) who lent him the coins to play the slot-machine. The dialogue is honed and witty, the situations generally funny and tightly rendered. It's just that *Sour Grapes* slowly runs out of breath the further it pushes past the 25-minute length. The insistent score and over-eager acting take on an increasing whiff of desperation. **West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End.**

Xan Brooks

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

The Opposite of Sex (18)

Christina Ricci plays 16-year-old bitch-on-wheels Dedee, shooting from the lip and causing all kinds of havoc when she moves in with her mild-mannered brother (Martin Donovan). Director Don Roos's script bristles with acidulous one-liners.



The Truman Show (PG)

Peter Weir's ingenious and unsettling fantasy is, in the end, an escape movie - in the case of Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey, above), it's breaking out of the round-the-clock TV docu-soap that is his own life.

π (15)

Darren Aronofsky's debut, filmed in sooty black-and-white, tells the story of a genius mathematician. This stylish indie movie fearlessly combines *Wall Street*, Jewish mysticism and nightmarish headaches.

Antz (PG)

Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast features Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely war hero and opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Terrific fun.

The Dream Life of Angels (18)

Erick Zovca's remarkable debut draws its strength from the contrasting personalities of Isa (Eliot Bouchez) and Marie (Natacha Renier), whose friendship comes alive amid the drab environs of Lille.

ANTHONY QUINN AND XAN BROOKS

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

The Invention of Love

(Theatre Royal, Haymarket)
A witty, heartbreaking fantasia by Tom Stoppard (below) on the twin passions of AE Housman: scholarship and an unavailable heterosexual friend.
To 6 Feb

Kafka's Dick

(Piccadilly Theatre)
Spiriting Kafka to suburban England, this uproarious romp by Alan Bennett survives some peculiar casting by Alan Bennett survives some peculiar casting by Peter Hall's revival.
To 26 Feb

Copenhagen

(Cottesloe)
Michael Frayn's profound and haunting meditation on science, morality and the mysteries of human motivation.
To 27 Jan

The Winter's Tale

(RSC, Stratford)
Amazingly rich and complex performance from Antony Sher in Gregory Doran's Romanov-style production.
In rep to 4 Mar

Martin Yesterday

(Royal Exchange, Manchester)
Marianne Elliott directs this sharp new play from cult Canadian dramatist Brad "Unidentified Human Remains" Fraser.
To 6 Feb

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Andreas Gursky

(Serpentine Gallery)
Photographs 1994-98: wide-vision, high-finish, micro-detailed vistas of our world - stock-exchange floor, cityscape, airport, alpine valley - images filled with more than the eye can see.
To 7 Mar



Grinling Gibbons

(V&A)
The finest chisel-work of the master 17th-century woodcarver (above), who made intricacy and the abundance of nature his trademark.
To 24 Jan

Chris Ofili

(Whitworth Gallery, Manchester)
This upbeat, 1998 Turner Prize-winner creates dense, decorative paintings with swirls of dots, eyes, Afros, black icons and bulls of elephant dung.
To 24 Jan

Bridget Riley

(Abbott Hall Gallery, Kendal)
A small retrospective, spanning Riley's career as top British abstractionist - from the shimmering monochromes of her early Sixties Op Art fame, to colour, stripes, diagonals, curves.
To 31 Jan

Oppé Watercolour Collection

(Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)
Classic 18th- and 19th-century British watercolours, including Alexander Cozens' blot-derived sketches, John Sell Cotman, Constable and Francis Towne.
To 24 Jan

TOM LUBBOCK

GENERAL RELEASE

THE ACID HOUSE (18)

A trio of interrelated shorts culled from the stories of Irvine Welsh. *The Acid House* plays out in the down-and-dirty landscape of inner-city Edinburgh, and darts with brio between a range of moods and tones. **West End: Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Warner Village West End.**

ANTZ (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends, right.* **West End: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero.**

THE APPLE (18)

Seventeen-year-old Samira Makhmalbaf's precocious debut stages a true-life re-creation of the fortunes of Iran's Naderi sisters. This is a luminous, extraordinary misfire from a burgeoning Iranian film scene. **West End: Metro, Renoir.**

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

The follow-up to *Babe* tosses the hapless "sheep pig" into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of assorted waifs. **West End: Plaza, UCI Whiteleys.**

THE DREAM LIFE OF ANGELS (18)

See *The Independent Recommends, right.* **West End: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero.**

ELIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. **West End: ABC Panton Street, Curzon Minima, Odeon Mezzanine.**

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15)

Will Smith's fall-guy DA teams up with Gene Hackman's pensioned-off Pentagon warhorse, probes a political cover-up and gets embroiled in all manner of Big Brother-type trouble. A big, noisy and effectively claustrophobic conspiracy thriller. **West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road.**

LITTLE VOICE (15)

Holed up in her bedroom, timid Jane Horrocks perfects strident Shirley Bassey/Judy Garland impersonations when she falls in with Michael Caine's sleazy impresario. Though bitty at times, *Little Voice* is redeemed by bracing black comedy, Horrocks's vocal pyrotechnics, plus a marvellously weighted turn from Caine. **West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Curzon Mayfair, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road.**

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)

This swashbuckler gallops full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. **West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End.**

OUT OF SIGHT (15)

George Clooney plays the law-breaking hero as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. **West End: Plaza, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero.**

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)

The Parent Trap catches Disney reheating its 1961 heart-warmer into a cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters determined to get their parents (Natascha Richardson, Dennis Quaid) back together. **West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage.**

π (15)

See *The Independent Recommends, right.* **West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Screen on the Hill.**

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)

In planning his cartoon life of Moses, DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged it "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat. **West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero.**

PSYCHO (15)

Gus Van Sant's shot-by-shot *Psycho* reconstruction is a bizarre undertaking. Hefty Vince Vaughn stands in for twitwyt Anthony Perkins, and Anne Heche for Janet Leigh. Meantime, Van Sant simply runs through a karaoke cover-version of the Hitchcock classic, a pitch-perfect bit of movie mimicry which has a definite curiosity value without ever adding up to much more besides. **West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Haymarket.**

RUSH HOUR (15)

Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker star in this hit-and-miss affair. **West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End.**

THE SIEGE (15)

A rare Hollywood attempt to get to grips with contemporary geopolitics. *The Siege* winds up a hopelessly fingers-and-thumbs affair. The plot gets draped with all manner of garbled goings-on as Denzel Washington's FBI man rubs shoulders with Bruce Willis's army renegade. **West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea.**

SITCOM (18)

Someone ought to introduce François Ozon to a good editor. The debuting French film-maker is clearly a man of talent, but, in *Sitcom*, he lets his ideas maraud madly off the leash. In this scattergun satire of middle-class mores, Ozon takes abundant pleasure in dismantling a standard nuclear family. The result is sharp, savage and funny one moment and indulgent the next. **West End: Curzon Minima, Curzon Soho.**

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION (PG)

A belated Christmas gift for Trekkies the land over, *Insurrection* hits the cinemas stuffed with in-the-know gags and wrapped up in more cornball romance than we're used to. The nominal story sees Patrick Stewart's do-gooding captain tangleling with villainous F. Murray Abraham, who's hatched a scheme to take over a planet of perpetual youth. **West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero.**

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (15)

Ben Stiller, Cameron Diaz and Matt Dillon star in this latest comedy from the pathologically tasteless writer-director team of Peter and Bobby Farrelly. The film is basically a soft-centred romantic comedy of the kind that drifts out of Hollywood on a regular basis. The gags never amount to more than vulgar icing on an unexceptionally bland cake. **West End: ABC Piccadilly, Odeon Mezzanine.**

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (PG)

The immortal "You know how to whistle, don't you?" line aside, *To Have and Have Not* has come to be more regarded for its behind-the-scenes history than its narrative content. Bogart is the Martinique-based skipper sandwiched between the Vichy government and the Free French resistance. **West End: Curzon Soho.**

THE TRUMAN SHOW (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends, right.* **West End: Plaza.**

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (15)

Robin Williams perfects a lopsided simper as the dead chap who lights out to a cod-Impressionist heaven, before jettisoning southward to rescue his suicide-bride. **West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue.**

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET

(0870-902 0418) @ Baker Street
Closed

ABC PANTON STREET

(0870-902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Closed

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE

(0870-902 0402) @ Leicester
Square Texas Chainsaw Massacre
1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm,
3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE

(0870-902 0403) @ Leicester
Square Buffalo 6.15pm,
3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm The
Elm 4pm, 8.40pm The Governess
1.45pm, 6.25pm On Console la
Chanson 1pm, 3.20pm, 5.10pm,
8.40pm La Vie Revee
des Anges 1.25pm, 3.45pm,
6.25pm, 8.40pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

(0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham
Court Road Enemy of the
State 1.05pm, 3.45pm, 6.25pm,
8.10pm Little Voice 1.25pm,
3.55pm, 7pm, 9.25pm (PG)
1.20pm, 3.25pm, 5.25pm,
7.30pm, 9.35pm

BARBICAN SCREEN

(0171-638 8891)
@ Moorgate Little Voice 6.15pm,
8.40pm The Opposite of Sex
6.15pm, 8.40pm

CHELSEA CINEMA

(0171-351 3742) @ Sloane
Square Little Voice 2.20pm,
4.30pm, 6.40pm, 9pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE

(0171-498 3323) @ Clapham
Common Dobermann 2.45pm,
5pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm
Little Voice 1.30pm, 4.45pm,
7pm, 9.15pm The Opposite
of Sex 2.15pm, 4.30pm,
6.45pm, 9pm

CURZON MAYFAIR

(0171-369 1720) @ Green Park
Little Voice 2pm, 4.15pm,
6.30pm, 8.45pm

CURZON SOHO

(0171-734 2255 (12noon-6pm))
@ Leicester Square x (PG) 1pm,
3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm Sitcom
1.30pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm,
7.30pm, 9.30pm Have and
Have Not 2.30pm, 4.45pm,
7.10pm, 9.20pm

ELPHANT AND CASTLE CORNET

(0171-703 4968) @ Elephant &
Castle Enemy of the State 3pm,
5.45pm, 8.20pm Meet Joe Black
3.30pm, 7.25pm The Siege
3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE

(0990-888990) @ Leicester
Square Meet Joe Black 12noon,
3.45pm, 7.45pm, 11.30pm
The Price of Egypt 1.20pm,
3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm, 11pm
Psycho 12.45pm, 3.15pm,
6.15pm, 8.45pm, 11.15pm

GATE NOTTING HILL

(0171-727 4043) @ Notting Hill
Gate x (PG) 3.15pm, 5.15pm,
7.15pm, 9.15pm, 11.15pm
(+ Short: Drip Drop)

HAMMERSMITH VIRGIN

(0870-907 0718) @ Ravenscourt
Park Enemy of the State
3pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm, 11.10pm
Little Voice 1.20pm, 3.50pm,
6.30pm, 9pm Meet Joe Black
12.50pm, 4.30pm, 8.10pm
The Siege 12.45pm, 3.15pm,
6.30pm, 9.05pm

ICA CINEMA

(0171-930 3647) @ Charing
Cross Buttoners 5pm, 7pm
Nostalgia (1921 Version)
8.30pm Peer Zelenka
In Conversation: Buttoners
Event 7pm

METRO

(0171-734 1506) @ Piccadilly
Circus The Apple (S18) 1pm, 2.55pm,
5pm, 7pm, 9pm Dobermann
2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm

CURZON MINIMA

(0171-369 1723) @ Hyde Park
Corner/Kingsbridge Elizabeth
6.30pm Sitcom 4.50pm, 8.50pm

NOTTING HILL CORNET

(0171-727 6705) @ Notting Hill
Gate Enemy of the State 3pm,
5.50pm, 8.30pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN

(08705-050007) @ Camden Town
The Acid House 11.35pm
Dobermann 12.35pm, 2.35pm,
4.35pm, 6.55pm, 9.10pm,
11.50pm Enemy of the
State 12.30pm, 6pm, 11.15pm
Little Voice 12.45pm, 3.15pm,
5.45pm, 8.40pm, 11.30pm
Psycho 3.30pm, 9pm The Siege
12.15pm, 2.45pm, 5.20pm,
8.25pm, 11.25pm Star Trek:
Insurrection 12noon, 2.20pm,
4.40pm, 6.50pm, 9pm

ODEON HAYMARKET

(08705-050007) @ Piccadilly
Circus Closed for refurbishment
until further notice.

ODEON KENSINGTON

(08705-050007) @ High Street
Kensington Enemy of the
State 12noon, 3pm, 6.05pm,
9.10pm, 12.00am Little Voice
1.45pm, 4.20pm, 6.55pm,
9.30pm, 11.40pm On Console
la Chanson 2pm, The Opposite
of Sex 2.20pm, 4.40pm, 7pm,
9.20pm, 11.35pm (+ Short:
Horsehoe) x (PG) 1pm, 3.10pm,
5.20pm, 7.20pm, 9.35pm,
11.40pm Star Trek: Insurrection
12.25pm, 7.10pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE

(08705-050007) @ Leicester
Square The Siege 12.55pm,
3.35pm, 5.55pm, 8.30pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH

(08705-050007) @ Marble Arch
Enemy of the State 12.15pm,
3.10pm, 6.05pm, 9pm,
12midnight Little Voice 1.25pm,
3.55pm, 6.35pm, 9.10pm Meet
Joe Black 12.40pm, 4.30pm,
8.25pm, 12.10am Psycho
1.25pm, 6.35pm, 11.40pm Rush
Hour 12.15pm, 11.40pm The
Siege 12.15pm, 11.40pm Star
Trek: Insurrection 3.55pm, 9.10pm

ODEON MEZZANINE

(08705-050007) @ Leicester
Square Elizabeth 12.30pm,
3pm, 5.30pm, 8.10pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking
Barrels 1.20pm, 4.10pm,
6.10pm, 8.35pm The Mask
of Zorro 2.30pm, 5.15pm,
8.10pm Ronin 2.45pm, 5.50pm,
8.20pm There's Something
About Mary 12.40pm, 3.10pm,
5.40pm, 8.15pm

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE

(08705-050007) @ Swiss
Cottage Enemy of the State
12.10pm, 2.50pm, 5.35pm,
8.20pm The Land Girls 1.15pm,
3.45pm, 6.20pm Little Voice
1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm,
8.45pm The Mask of Zorro 2pm,
5.10pm, 8.10pm, Meet Joe
Black 12.15pm, 3.50pm,
7.30pm Psycho 8.40pm
The Siege 12.30pm, 3.10pm,
5.50pm, 8.25pm

ODEON WEST END

(08705-050007) @ Leicester
Square Enemy of the State
12.05pm, 2.45pm, 5.30pm,
8.25pm, 11.25pm Little Voice
1

HAMPSTEAD
ABC (0870-9020413) • Belsize Park Cinema of the State 8.15pm
Little Voice 2pm, 4.15pm, 6.30pm,
8.45pm, 10.15pm, 12.15pm
7.20pm Star Trek: Insurrection
2.40pm, 5.00pm

HARROW
SAFFARI CINEMA (0181-426 0303)
• Harrow & Wealdstone Dots Sahale
Rakha 1.30pm, 5pm, 7pm
The Soldier (Asian Film) 8.45pm
Zakham 8.45pm

WARRNER VILLAGE (0181-427 9009) • Harrow on the Hill
Enemy of the State 12.10pm
3pm, 6pm, 9pm, 11.40pm
Little Voice 1.40pm, 4.05pm,
6.30pm, 8.40pm, 11.20pm
The Mask of Zorro 11.45am,
2.40pm, 5.20pm, 8.30pm, 11.30pm
Meet Joe Black 12.10pm, 2.30pm,
7.20pm, 11pm
My Name Is Joe
6.55pm The Opposite of Sex
11.50am, 2.10pm, 4.30pm, 7.20pm,
9.50pm, 12.10am The Parent
Trap 1.10pm, 4pm The Prince
of Egypt 1.55pm, 4.15pm,
6.35pm, 9.10pm, 11.50pm
Rush Hour 9.30pm, 12.00am
The Siege 1.30pm, 4.05pm,
6.45pm, 9.20pm, 12.10am
Star Trek: Insurrection 1.15pm,
3.40pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm, 11.15pm

HOLLOWAY
ODEON (08705-050007) • Holloway Road Cinema of the State 12.50pm, 3.30pm,
6.15pm, 9pm Little Voice 12.15pm,
2.35pm, 5pm, 7.25pm, 9.50pm
The Mask of Zorro 12.15pm,
3.15pm, 6.15pm, 9.15pm Meet Joe
Black 1.20pm, 5pm, 8.40pm
Psycho 12.35pm, 2.55pm, 5.20pm,
7.40pm, 10pm Rush Hour 12.35pm,
2.50pm, 5.20pm, 7.35pm, 10pm
The Siege 1.20pm, 4.25pm,
7.05pm, 9.45pm Star Trek:
Insurrection 12.20pm, 2.40pm,
5.05pm, 7.30pm, 9.55pm

ILFORD
ODEON (08705-050007) • Gants Hill Dancin' at Lughnasa
5.50pm Enemy of the State 3pm,
5.15pm, 8.05pm Meet Joe
Black 2.15pm, 7.15pm
Psycho 8.25pm Star Trek:
Insurrection 1.55pm, 6.05pm

KILBURN
THE TRICOLOUR CINEMA
(0171-328 1000) • Kilburn
The Fountainhead Thu 3pm
Little Voice 4pm, 6.30pm,
8.45pm (4 Short Stories 11am
with 8.45pm performance only)

KINGSTON
ABC OPTIONS (0870-9020409)
BR: Kingston Enemy of the State
2.25pm, 5.15pm, 8.05pm Meet Joe
Black 2.15pm, 7.15pm
Psycho 8.25pm Star Trek:
Insurrection 1.55pm, 6.05pm

MUSWELL HILL
ODEON (08705-050007) • Highgate Enemy of the State
3.45pm, 6.30pm Meet Joe Black
12.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm
The Siege 1.10pm, 3.50pm,
6.15pm, 8.40pm Star Trek:
Insurrection 1.35pm, 6.20pm

PECKHAM
PREMIER (0181-235 3006)
BR: Peckham Rye Blade 11.55pm
Enemy of the State 3.40pm,
6.20pm, 9pm, 11.40pm Little Voice
5.05pm, 7.10pm, 9.15pm Meet Joe
Black 4.55pm, 8.30pm, My Name
Is Joe 7pm The Player's Club
12.10pm Psycho 4.45pm,
7.05pm, 9.25pm, 11.45pm Rush
Hour 9.10pm, 11.20pm The Siege
4.20pm, 6.50pm, 9.20pm, 11.50pm
Star Trek: Insurrection 1pm, 5pm

PURLEY
ABC (0870-902 0407) BR: Purley
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.10pm
The Siege 1.20pm, 4.10pm, 7.10pm
Star Trek: Insurrection 3.20pm,
6.10pm, 8.30pm

PUTNEY
ABC (0870-902 0401) • Putney
Bridge BR: Putney Enemy of the
State 6pm, 9pm Little Voice
2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7.15pm, 9.30pm
Meet Joe Black 1pm, 4.45pm,
8.30pm Star Trek: Insurrection
1pm, 3.30pm

RICHMOND
ODEON (08705-050007) • Richmond
Little Voice 2pm, 4.20pm, 7pm, 9.30pm Meet Joe
Black 12.20pm, 4.30pm, 8.20pm,
The Siege 12.40pm, 3.20pm,
6.20pm, 9.10pm

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-902 0419) BR: Rochford
Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-902 0419) BR: Rochford
Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-902 0419) BR: Rochford
Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

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Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

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Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

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2.15pm, 5.40pm

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Star Trek: Insurrection
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Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

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Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
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2.15pm, 5.40pm

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Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

ROCHFORD
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Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-902 0419) BR: Rochford
Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-902 0419) BR: Rochford
Enemy of the State 10.10pm
Meet Joe Black 2.10pm, 7.20pm
Psycho 2.30pm, 5.55pm
Star Trek: Insurrection
2.15pm, 5.40pm

THEATRE
WEST END

Ticket availability details are for today; times and prices for the week running times include intervals. • Seats at all prices • Seats at some prices • Returns only

ALARMS & EXCURSIONS
Michael Frayn's new comedy about a dinner party which is interrupted by mysterious messages from the future. Seats at all prices. • Seats at some prices • Returns only. [1] Sun, [3] Tue, [4] Wed, [5] Thur, [6] Fri, [7] Sat.

AMADEUS David Suchet stars as Salieri in Peter Shaffer's acclaimed drama. Old Vic Theatres, SW1 (0171-494 5065) • Picc Circle. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] [7] 3pm, £19.50-£27.50, 130 mins.

ANNE Rags to riches story of the nascently optimistic stars of the Victoria Palace. Victoria Street, SW1 (0171-834 1317) • Victoria. Tue-Sat 7.30pm, [4] [7] 2.30pm, [1] 4pm, £7.50-£32.50, 165 mins.

ART Larry Lamb, Jack Dee, Tim Healy in Yasmina Reza's comedy about art and friendship. Wyndham's Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1746) • Leic. Tue-Sat 8pm, [4] 3pm, [7] [1] 5pm, £9.50-£27.50, 90 mins.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Lavish musical based on Disney's cartoon version of the favourite fairy tale. Dominion Theatre Court Road, W1 (0171-730 0000) • Leic. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [5] [7] 2.30pm, £18.50-£35, 150 mins.

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's long-running Liverpool musical melodrama. Phoenix Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1733) • Leic. Square. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] 3pm, [7] 4pm, £11.50-£32.50, 165 mins.

BUDDY Musical biog-show tracing the brief life of Buddy Holly. Serand Aldwych, WC2 (0171-930 8800) • Covent Garden/Charing X. Tue-Thur 8pm, Fri 5.30pm & 8.30pm, Sat 5pm & 8.30pm, mats [1] 4pm, £10-£27, half price Friday matinee, 160 mins.

CATS Lloyd Webber's musical version of TS Eliot's poems. New London Palace Street, WC2 (0171-405 0071) • Picc Circle. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [3] [7] 3pm, £12.50-£35, 165 mins.

CHICKADEE Maria Friedman and Peter Davidson star in this hit Broadway musical. Adelphi Mall Lane, WC2 (0171-344 0055) • Charing X. Mon-Sat 8pm, [4] [7] 3pm, £16-£36 (incl booking fee), 130 mins.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (Abridged) Reduced Shakespeare Company last-forward through 37 plays. Criterion Piccadilly Circus, W1 (0171-369 1747) • Picc Circle. Wed-Sat 8pm, [5] 3pm, [7] 5pm, [1] 4pm, £6-£25, Tur mats all seats £10, 120 mins.

DR DOLITTLE Phillip Schofield talks to the animals in this new stage adaptation. London Apollo Hammersmith Queen Caroline Street, W6 (0171-416 6022) • Hammersmith. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [4] [7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50, 150 mins.

FAME THE MUSICAL High-octane stage version of the TV series. Prince of Wales Coventry Street, W1 (0171-839 5972) • Leic Square. Mon-Thur 8pm, Fri 5.30pm & 8.30pm, Sat 4pm & 8pm, ends 16 Jan. £15-£30, 140 mins.

THE GLORY OF LIVING Drama set amongst the trailer parks of southern America from new playwright Rebecca Gilman. Royal Court, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-565 5000) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] 3pm, [7] 4pm, £8-£25, 165 mins.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND Christopher Marlowe's comedy. York in Peter Hall's acclaimed production of Wilde's comedy. Lyric Shafesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5045) • Picc Circle. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] 3pm, [7] 4pm, £8-£25, 165 mins.

THE INSPECTOR CALLS Stephen Daldry's widely-acclaimed production of Agatha Christie's novel. Garrick Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-494 5045) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] 3pm, [7] 4pm, £8-£25, 165 mins.

THE INVENTION OF LOVE Tom Stoppard's play about the life of poet A.E. Housman. Wyndham's Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171-369 1746) • Leic. Tue-Sat 8pm, [4] 3pm, [7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50, 120 mins.

JESUS, MY BOY Tom Conti stars in this comedy about three sisters returning home for their mother's funeral. Vaudeville Strand, WC2 (0171-836 9987) • Charing X. Mon-Sat 8pm, [5] [7] 3pm, £8-£27.50, 105 mins.

THE MEMORY OF WATER Alison Steadman and Julia Swabla star in this comedy about three sisters returning home for their mother's funeral. Vaudeville Strand, WC2 (0171-836 9987) • Charing X. Mon-Sat 8pm, [5] [7] 3pm, £8-£27.50, 105 mins.

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MISS SAGON Musical which recasts the Madam Butterfly tragedy to Vietnam. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane Catherine Street, WC2 (0171-494 5060) • Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [4] [7] 3pm, £5.75-£35, 165 mins.

THE MOUSETRAP Agatha Christie's whodunit. St Martin's West Strand, WC2 (0171-366 1443) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 8pm, [3] 2.45pm, [7] 5pm, £10-£24.50, 135 mins.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA Andrew Lloyd Webber's Gothic musical. Her Majesty's Haymarket, SW1 (0171-494 5060) • Picc Circle. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [4] [7] 3pm, £10-£35, 150 mins.

RENT Musical inspired by La Bohème and set in modern day New York. Shaftesbury Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2 (07000-211221) • Holborn. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [4] [7] 3pm, £12.50-£32.50, 160 mins.

ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE
OLIVER! Peter Pan Stephen Oliver's music accompanies the tale of the boy who would not grow up, with Michael Bryant as the Storyteller in rep tonight 7.15pm, ends 20 Feb.

LYTELTON: Clio, Camping, Emmanuelle and Dick Terry. Johnson's new play looks at the Carron on actors and recreates Sid James, Kenneth Williams and Babs Windsor on stage. In rep tonight 7.30pm, ends 16 Jan. 120 mins.

COTTESLOE: Copenhagen New drama from Michael Frayn about the discovery of the atom. In rep tonight 7.30pm, ends 27 Jan. 145 mins.

NY2000: Serfe Barbara Castle discusses John Galsworthy's drama. Tonight 6pm, Oliver & Lytelton: £8-£27, Cottesloe: £12-£18, NY2000: £4, concs £3. Day seats from 10am. South Bank. SE1 (0171-452 3000) • Waterloo.

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
THE BARBARIAN: Measure for Measure. The examination of justice. In rep tonight 7.15pm.

THE PIT: Bad Weather Robert Iler's examination of the breakdown in family relationships. In rep tonight 7.15pm. Barbican: £5-£26, The Pit: £11-£18.50. Barbican Centre, EC2 (0171-638 8891) • Barbican.

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER Hit 1970s musical featuring legendary songs by the Bee Gees and starring Adam Garcia. London Palace Street, WC2 (0171-416 6022) • Hammersmith. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [4] [7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50, 135 mins.

THE SNOWMAN Award-winning production of Raymond Briggs' contemporary classic. Sadler's Wells At The Peacock Portugal Street, WC2 (0171-863 8222) • Holborn. Tonight 7.30pm, ends 30 Jan. £7.50-£32.50.

STARLIGHT EXPRESS Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit-tech roller-musical. Apollo Victoria Wilton Road, SW1 (0171-416 6070) • Victoria. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [3] [7] 3pm, £12.50-£30, 150 mins.

THE STREET OF CROCODILES Bruno Sculz's short stories provide the inspiration for Theatre de Compagnie's acclaimed and absurdist drama. Queen's Theatre, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-494 5040) • Picc Circle. Tue-Sat 8pm, [7] 3pm, [5] 4pm, £8-£25, 165 mins.

THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE Belinda Lang stars in Alan Ayckbourn's comedy. Duchess Catherine Street, WC2 (0171-494 5075) • Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] [7] 3pm, ends 23 Jan. £15-£27.50, 140 mins.

VASSA Howard Davies directs a new stage version of Maxine Gorke's tale of a matriarch and her down-trodden family. Albery St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-369 1730) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [5] [7] 3pm, ends 27 Mar. £29-£50.

THE WEIR Conor McPherson's drama is set in Ireland and examines ideas of ghosts and angels. Royal Court Downstairs (at the Duke of York's) St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-565 5000) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, [4] [7] 3pm, £8-£25, 90 mins.

WEST SIDE STORY Brand new production of Bernstein's classic musical, attempting to recreate the feel of the original Broadway hit. Prince Edward Old Compton Street, W1 (0171-447 5400) • Leic Sq. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] [7] 3pm, £15-£35, 160 mins.

WHISTLE DOWN THE WIND Lloyd Webber's new musical based on the life of the same name. Aldwych Aldwych, WC2 (0171-416 6000) • Holborn. Mon-Sat 7.45pm, [5] [7] 3pm, £10-£32.50, 120 mins.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK Susan Hill's chilling ghost story. Fortune Riverside Theatre, WC2 (0171-836 2338) • Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 8pm, [3] 3pm, [7] 4pm, £8-£25, 110 mins.

THE MILL AT SONNING Two Dozen Red Roses comic love story set in romantic Rome. Tue-Sat 8.15pm, mats Sat 2.15pm, ends 6 Feb. £12.95-£32.95 including dinner. Sonning Eye (0118-969 8000)

SEVENOAKS
THEATRE A SPERM Aerial Existential love story. Tonight 8pm, £8, concs £7. London Road (01732-450175)

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE The Winter's Tale Seasonal tale of obsessive jealousy directed by Gregory Doran. Tonight 7.30pm, ends 4 Mar. £7-£30. Waterside (01789-295623)

SWAN THEATRE Trollope and Gressida Shakespeare's depiction of the human spirit undermined by bloody warfare. Tonight 7.30pm, ends 20 Feb. £5-£30. Waterside (01789-295623)

TORRINGTON
POUGH ARTS CENTRE King Arthur and the Knights of the Occasional Table Comedy duo Maggie Fox and Sue Ryding tackle the famous Arthurian legend. Tonight 8pm, £7.50, concs £7. Fore Street (01805-622552)

WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA
PALACE THEATRE CENTRE Murder is Easy Stage adaptation of Agatha Christie's murder mystery. Mon-Sat 8pm, ends 30 Jan. £5.50-£14.50, concs available. London Road (01702-342564)

FIRST CALL, LAST CALL

First Call
CROONER-COMEDIAN Bob Downe, whose idea of sophistication is a Crimplene suit, was once arts editor of Australian Vogue. He's a performer, an Ozdie comic in the camp style of Dame Edna, who harangues the audience, sings cheesy tunes and gives fashion advice such as "your collar isn't big enough unless you can see it with peripheral vision".
The Dome, Brighton (01273 700747) 1 Apr. Y Theatre, Leicester (01162 556507) 10 Apr. Bloomsbury Theatre, London WC1 (0171-383 4080) 13-15 Apr. Derrig Theatre, Northampton (01604-626 232) 2 May

Last Call
SINCE THEIR highly acclaimed, million-selling debut album *Moseley Shoals* was released in 1996, Ocean Colour Scene (right) have refused to stand still unlike many of their Brit Pop contemporaries. Nevertheless, record company squabbles and rumours of a split have made recent times something of a roller coaster ride for the boys from Birmingham. Despite their last album, *Marchin' Already* reaching No.1, many felt that the band were a spent force in terms of creativity. However, more traditional rock is on the way and tickets are selling fast.
The Caird Hall, Dundee (01382 434940) 1 May

THEATRE
COUNTRYWIDE

BIRMINGHAM
ALEXANDRA THEATRE A Tale of Two Cities Paul Nicholas stars in this new musical adaptation of the 19th-century novel. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mats Wed & Sat 2.30pm, ends 16 Jan. £7-£24.50. Suffolk Street (0121-643 1231)

BIRMINGHAM REP A Christmas Carol Michael Bogdanov directs a new adaptation of Charles Dickens's Victorian tale of greed and redemption. Tonight 7.15pm, ends 16 Jan. £7.25-£19, concs available.

BRIGHTON
THEATRE ROYAL The Holly and the Ivy Though-proving study of life in a village from Middle Ground Theatre. Tonight 7.45pm, £6.50-£12.50, concs available. Bond Street (01273-328488)

BRISTOL
NEW VIC STUDIO Freebird Jon Ivay's black comedy about three mopey courtiers on a dodgy mission in Cornwall. Mon-Wed 7.30pm, Thu-Sat 8pm, mats Sat 2.30pm, ends 30 Jan. £9, concs £6. King Street (0117-987 7877)

CANTERBURY
MARLOWE THEATRE Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Eliza-Pete presenter Tim Vincent gets festive. Tonight 7pm, £8-£15, concs available. The Friars (01227-787787)

FRIDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.9-99.5MHz FM)
6.30 Zoe Ball, 9.00 Simon Mayo.
12.00 Kevin Greening, 2.00
Mark Radcliffe, 4.00 Chris
Moyle, 6.00 Pete Tong's Essential
Selection, 9.00 Judge Jules.
11.00 Westwood - Radio 1 Rap
Show, 2.00 Fabio and Grooverider,
4.00 - 7.00 Emma B.

RADIO 2
(88.9-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy, 7.30 Wake
Up to Wogan, 9.30 Ken Bruce,
12.00 Jimmy Young, 2.00 Ed
Stewart, 5.05 Des Lynam, 7.00 A
Very British Story: Michael Freed-
land presents a four-part personal
exploration of the British film in-
dustry over the last sixty years. In
the second programme, he takes a
look at some of Britain's great
cinematic successes, from 'The
Private Life of Henry VIII' to 'Gand-
hi' and 'Chariots of Fire'. With con-
tributions from Lord Putnam,
Michael Winner, Bryan Forbes, Pe-
ter Rogers and Sir Sidney Samuel-
son, 7.30 Friday Night is Music
Night, 9.35 Frankenstein. See *Pick of the Day*, 9.30 Listen to the
Band, 10.00 David Jacobs, 12.00
Lynn Parsons, 6.00 - 6.00 Lata
Sharma.

RADIO 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air, 9.00 Masterworks,
10.30 Artist of the Week,
11.00 - 11.01 Sound Stories,
12.00 - 12.01 Composer of the
Week: Rimsky-Korsakov,
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Con-
cert, 2.00 The BBC Orchestras,
4.00 Music Restored, 4.45 Music
Machine, 5.00 In Tune, 7.30
Visions - the Music of Olivier
Messiaen. Live from Westminster
Cathedral, presented by John
Tusa, the BBC Symphony Orches-
tra launch their annual weekend of
concerts. This year, they celebrate
the life and work of French master
Olivier Messiaen. Conductor An-
drew Davis, Rosemary Hardy (so-
prano), Messiaen: Poemes pour
le. See *Pick of the Day*, 9.30
Messiaen and Religion. Mes-
siaen created an extraordinary

soundworld inspired by his pas-
sion for birdsong and his deep
Catholic faith. This is the first of
two interval programmes investi-
gating the man behind the music.
8.35 Concert, part 2. Messiaen:
Eclairs sur l'au-dela.
9.35 Postscript. Paul Neuberg
concludes his exploration of the
Communist project which sought to
use the arts to remould people's
minds. 5. 'Born of Betrayal'. In
eastern Europe, writers and
artists moved from postwar fer-
vour to a sense of betrayal after
Stalin's death in 1953. Their call for
an end to lies and oppression fi-
nally precipitated the Hungarian
Uprising of 1956 against the Com-
munist regime.
10.00 Visions: the Music of Olivier
Messiaen. Live from Westmin-
ster Cathedral, London. Naj
Hakim (organ). Messiaen: La na-
tivity du Seigneur. Hakim is Mes-
siaen's distinguished successor at
La Trinite, the Parish church where
Messiaen himself was organist.
See *Pick of the Day*, 11.00
Offenbach.
11.30 - 11.31 Jazz Century.
12.00 Composer of the Week:
Poulenc.
1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4
(92.4-94.8MHz FM)
6.00 Today, 9.00 News: Desert Island Discs,
9.45 Serial: The Doctor, the De-
tective and Arthur Conan Doyle.
(R)
10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.

PICK OF THE DAY

STARTING TODAY, there's a
chance to experience a new
adaptation of Mary Shelley's
classic *Frankenstein* (9.15pm
R2), albeit in disappointingly
short weekly episodes. Sir
Derek Jacobi (right) gives a fresh
reading of Shelley's ideas-driven
Gothic fable about a Genevan
natural philosopher student who
transforms bits of corpses into
an icon of man-made misery.

The BBC Symphony
Orchestra's annual weekend-long
celebration of a 20th-century
composer is devoted this year
to Olivier Messiaen. Tonight
in Visions (7.30pm and 10pm
R3), concerts at Westminster
Cathedral include the early love
songs, *Poemes pour Mi*, and his
final work, the monumental
Eclairs sur l'au-dela.
DOMINIC CAVENTISH



Gerard Clarke, rugby player and
one of the finest ever forwards, is
on the brink of international star-
dom. After a medical in prepara-
tion for the British tour of
Australia, he discovers that he has
contracted HIV. With his existence
under threat, will he stop at noth-
ing to protect his dream? With
Ralph Ineson and Andy Cryer. Di-
rector Pauline Harris.
10.00 The World Tonight. With
Robin Lustig.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Nana.
Juliet Stevenson reads Enid Bly-
ton's novel (10/15).
11.00 NEWS: Late Tackle. Eleanor
Oldroyd and guests discuss the
week's sporting issues.
11.30 Sporting Philanthropists.
12.00 News.
12.30 The Late Book: Last Re-
sults.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.30 World News.
5.35 Shipping Forecast.
5.40 Inshore Forecast.
5.45 Prayer for the Day.
5.47 Leisure Update.
5.56 - 6.00 Weather.

RADIO 4 LW
(198kHz)
9.45 - 10.00 Morning, 12.00 -
12.04 News, Shipping Forecast.
5.54 - 5.57 Shipping Forecast.
11.30 - 6.00 Parliament.
RADIO 5 LIVE
(693, 909kHz MW)
6.00 Breakfast.
9.00 Nicky Campbell.
12.00 The Midday News.
1.00 Ruscoe and Co.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

WHAT WITH Tuzi Driver, King
of Comedy, *The Untouchables*,
Cape Fear and *GoodFellas*,
Robert De Niro has a peerless
CV as a screen psycho. He adds
to his portfolio with *The Fan*
(10pm Sky Premier), a stylish
offering from Tony Scott
(*Crimson Tide*, *Enemy of the*
State). De Niro plays a stalker
contemplating murder as a
way of ensuring his hero's
(Wesley Snipes, right) place in
his beloved baseball team.

Jodie Foster, who famously
appeared alongside De Niro in
Taxi Driver, has always been
distinguished by the intelligent
care with which she has played
her roles - most notably in her
two Oscar-winning performances,
in *The Accused* and *The Silence*
of the Lambs. Now she is
making a name for herself as a
Hollywood director and is profiled
in tonight's *Femmes Fatales*
(8pm Sky Moviemax).
JAMES RAMPTON



SKY PREMIER
6.00 Draw! (1984) (82970863), 7.45
Army (1981) (4833329), 9.30 Empire of the
Sun (1987) (257169), 12.00 Project X
(1987) (81777), 1.45 Amy (1981)
(4734015), 3.30 Empire of the Sun
(1987) (471028), 6.00 Project X (1987)
(81467), 8.00 In Love and War (1996)
(83912), 10.00 The Fan (1996) (81221).
See *Pick of the Day*, 11.50 Dead Man
Walking (1995) (47434), 12.00 Fargo
(1996) (250442), 1.40 The Prisoner of
Zenda (1936) (838003), 3.30 -
6.00 Swimming with Sharks (1994)
(4234358).

SKY MOVIE MAX
7.00 The Wind in the Willows (1996)
(82009), 9.00 Address Unknown (1996)
(82024), 11.00 Godzilla vs Megalon (1976)
(87886), 1.00 Blue Rodeo (1995) (80270),
3.00 Address Unknown (1996) (82044),
5.00 The Wind in the Willows (1996)
(82009), 7.00 preview (4408), 7.30 UK
Top Ten (8202), 8.00 Femmes Fatales
(214), See *Pick of the Day*, 9.30 Movie
Magic (1981), 9.00 The Jerky Boys (1995)
(85073), 10.30 Private Parts (1996)
(85073), 12.20 Twin Town (1997)
(81254), 2.00 Grumpy Old Men (1995)
(83158), 3.40 Next Stop, Greenwich Vi-
lage (1978) (82298), 5.30 - 7.00 Blue
Rodeo (1995) (80270).

SKY ONE
7.00 Count Duckula (47757), 7.30 The
Chris Evans Breakfast Show (40488),
8.30 Hollywood Squares (28202), 9.00
Sally Jessy Raphael (46868), 10.00 The
Oprah Winfrey Show (55778), 11.00
Guilty (25215), 12.00 Jerry Jones
(40009), 1.00 Mad about You (40208),
1.30 Jeopardy (57573), 2.00 Sally Jessy
Raphael (40208), 3.00 Jerry Jones
(46868), 4.00 Guilty (1992), 5.00 Star
Trak - Deep Space Nine (7859), 6.00
Married with Children (4221), 6.30
Friends (5573), 7.00 The Simpsons (8318),
7.30 The Simpsons (7757), 8.00 Best of
the Crusier (84488), 9.00 The World's Most
Dangerous Animals 3 (57450), 10.00
Cops (86009), 11.00 Friends (78221),
11.30 Star Trek - Deep Space Nine
(19229), 12.30 Highlander (1928), 1.30 -
7.00 Long Play (583264).

SKY SPORTS 1
6.30 Futures in Sport (43467), 7.00 Sky
Sports Centre (74505), 7.30 World
Wrestling Federation Superstars
(248554), 8.30 Sky Sports Centre
(42808), 9.30 Racing News (8164),
9.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (44981), 9.30
You're on Sky Sports (2315), 10.00
Football League Review (7777), 11.00
Football Mundial (78842), 11.30 European
Tour Golf (78750), 2.30 What a Week-

end (8554), 3.00 The Rugby Club
(5047), 4.00 Trans World Sport (44554),
5.00 Futbol Mundial (5592), 5.30 What
a Weekend (3370), 6.00 Sky Sports
Centre (5550), 7.00 European Tour Golf
(84202), 10.00 Sky Sports Centre
(28008), 11.00 Hold the Back Page
(84005), 12.00 Sky Sports Centre
(83322), 1.00 World Wrestling (7793),
3.00 Hold the Back Page (5053), 4.00
Sky Sports Centre (8245), 5.00 H2O
(1992), 5.30 - 6.00 Moto-plus (34448).

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (56237), 7.30
International Cricket Australia v England
(552498), 11.00 International Cricket
South Africa v West Indies (550944),
3.30 International Cricket Australia v
England (23757), 6.00 Wild Spirits
(84208), 6.30 Moto-plus (47688),
7.00 Friday Night Football Chester vs
Brighton (755364), 12.27 Illuminations
(81077), 1.00 The Bill (82477), 1.30 Ford
USA (81083), 3.00 Friday Night Foot-
ball Chester vs Brighton (81077), 4.00 -
6.00 Basketball Birmingham Bulls vs
Sheffield Sharks (71713).

SKY SPORTS 3
11.30 Futures in Sport (5210339),
12.00 Trans World Sport (80177),
1.00 Fish TV: Tight Lines (800769),
2.00 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrap-
book (226467), 3.30 Ford Golf USA
(773539), 5.30 Giltella World Sport
Special (427900), 6.00 International
Cricket South Africa vs West Indies

(5084844), 7.00 International Cricket
Australia vs England (863015), 9.00
World Wrestling (821048), 12.00 Close.

EUROSPORT
7.30 Rally: Total Granada Dakar 99
(8568), 8.30 Snowboarding (70221),
9.00 Biatlon (29009), 10.30 Rally: Total
Granada Dakar 99 (85673), 11.00 Alpine
Sliding (54778), 12.30 Luge (23399), 1.00
Motor Sports (7754), 2.00 Tennis (4137),
3.30 Biatlon (29002), 5.00 Snowboard-
ing (7077), 6.00 Alpine Sliding (8708),
7.00 Tennis (74202), 9.30 Rally: Total
Granada Dakar 99 (85653), 10.00 Biatlon
(46405), 11.00 Xrem Sports: Yoz Action
(83573), 12.00 Rally: Total Granada
Dakar 99 (85687), 12.30 Close.

UK GOLD
7.00 Crossroads (9735991), 7.30
Neighbours (907550), 7.55 EastEnders
(85009), 8.30 The Bill (824683), 9.00
The Bill (855912), 9.30 The House of
Elton (230415), 10.30 Angels (835198),
11.00 Dallas (777931), 11.55 Neigh-
bours (855597), 12.25 EastEnders
(742283), 1.00 Juliet Bravo (484484),
2.00 Dallas (844594), 2.55 The Bill
(140400), 3.25 The Bill (82477), 3.55
EastEnders (832878), 4.30 Angels
(890757), 5.00 All Creatures Great and
Small (155657), 6.00 Dynasty
(42408), 7.00 The Comedy Alternative:
May to December (880202), 7.40
The Comedy Alternative: It Ain't Half
Hot, Mum (78750), 8.30 The Comedy

Alternative: Yes, Minister (3597912), 9.00
Men Behaving Badly (481757), 9.40
Knowing Me, Knowing You... with Alan
Partridge (329508), 10.00 Ruby Wax
Meets... Burt Reynolds (218047), 10.55
The Bill (824683), 11.25 The Bill
(840047), 11.55 Dr Who Omnibus
(538573), 1.30 Blake's Seven
(453413), 2.30 Best of the Old Grey
Whistle Test (425719), 3.00 - 7.00
Shopping with Screenshop (208516).

LIVING
6.00 Tiny and Crew (466468), 6.30
Pitbull the Frog (233077), 6.30 John-
son and Friends (443359), 6.45 Tiny
Tales (778205), 6.50 Poka Dot Shorts
(777623), 7.00 Practical Parenting
(803844), 7.15 Professor Bubble
(501025), 7.30 Callan (594031), 7.55
Bug Alert (808054), 7.55 Practical Pa-
renting (854370), 8.00 Barney and
Friends (723259), 8.30 Tiny Tales
(723070), 8.35 Tiny and Crew (821080),
8.50 Practical Parenting (813037), 9.00
Diet Show (259559), 9.30 The
Roseanne Show (777373), 10.00 The
Jerry Springer Show (522253), 10.50
Marty Povich (527750), 11.40 Living Is-
sues (587582), 12.00 Animal Rescue
(7438757), 12.40 Rescue 911
(834784), 1.00 Special Babies
(234523), 1.40 Beyond Belief: Fact or
Fiction (780254), 2.40 In a Law
(838073), 3.40 Living Room (728566),
4.00 Michael Cole (489253), 4.50
Roikids (352577), 5.40 Ready, Steady,
Go! (71350), 6.35 The Jerry Springer
Show (778797), 7.05 Rescue 911
(490888), 7.35 Animal Rescue
(85009), 8.00 Murder Call (732208),
8.50 Film: A Cry in the Dark (1998)
(5564405), 11.30 Sex Life Down Under
(538221), 12.00 Close.

TNT
9.00 WWC Nitro on TNT (2502432),
11.35 WWC Nitro (258508), 1.30 Shaft
(871) (542258), 3.35 The Slams (1973)
(7670603), 5.00 Close.

PARAMOUNT COMEDY CHANNEL
7.00 Cleaveless (4370), 7.30 Desmonds
(8689), 8.00 Roseanne (478), 8.30
Nurses (8685), 9.00 Cybil (1000),
9.30 Vic Reeves' Big Night Out (12009),
10.00 Films: Defiance (1981) (7580),
12.00 Late Night with David Letterman
(8174), 1.00 Tat (4500), 1.30 The
Critic (1718), 2.00 Dr Katz (10637), 2.30
Soap (83332), 3.00 Wings (87264), 3.30
Nightstand (7874), 4.00 Close.

S4C
As Channel 4 except: 9.00 Yago-
n/Schools (1080931), 12.00 Sesame
Street (8543918), 1.00 Planned Plant
(7989221), 1.45 Film: Unaired
(6981221), 1.45 Film: The Great St
Train Robbery (5422660), 4.30
Dishes (5227844), 5.00 Planned Plant
(2023414), 5.30 Countdown (801468),
6.30 Hero (880328), 7.00 Pabai y
Cwri (483427), 7.30 Newyddion
(838573), 8.00 Cofn Gwlad
(2434478), 8.30 Y Cwyl Rydychi
(4954775), 9.00 Pabai y Cwri
(113738), 10.00 Broodoldd (4954648),
10.35 Ffrwd (772088), 11.05 Euro-
trash (856371), 12.40 The Divine
David Presents (717729), 1.45 Bad Ass
Babes (3382500), 3.35 Film: Eye-
ewitness (8248158), 4.40 Close.

TYNE TV
As Yorkshire except: 12.20 North

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

WHEREAS HASTINGS is the oldest
annual tournament, the record for
sponsorship belongs to the Dutch
steel and aluminium company
Hoogovens, which has supported a
continuous series of tournaments
since 1938, broken only in 1945. For
many years now, their tournaments
have been in the small Dutch sea-
side town of Wijk aan Zee, with the
61st starting today. As always, there
are many different groups of various
strengths but attention will focus
mainly on the top grandmaster
tournament, which this year is par-
ticularly strong.

When Nigel Short discovered
that his wife was expecting a baby
at about the time of the tournament
he dropped out, leaving Anand,
Kramnik, Ivanchuk, Shirov, Svidler,
Topalov, Timman, Van Wely, Yermo-
linsky, Ivan Sokolov, Piket, Kasim-
dzhanov and Reinderman. Not a bad
bunch - and strengthened still fur-
ther when the gap was filled by one
Gary Kimovich Kasparov.

This is Kasparov's first tourna-
ment outing since his relatively in-
different performance in the seven-
player super-tournament in Linares
last March (they finished, in order:
Anand, Shirov, Kasparov and Kram-
nik, Svidler, Ivanchuk, Topalov).
Subsequently Anand has won two
serious tournaments outright, in
Madrid in June and Tilburg in Nov-
ember, while Kasparov's output at
"classical chess", as he calls it, has
been confined to just the single 4-2
match victory against Jan Timman
in Prague in September (his im-
pressive 4-0 victory against Topalov
in May was at quickplay).

Without sticking my neck out, I
expect the fight for first place to be
between Kasparov (who now has

something to prove), Anand and
Kramnik, with Ivanchuk, Shirov
and Svidler having some chances if
they have a really good tourna-
ment. The one thing Anand will be
most anxious to avoid - and Kas-
parov to repeat - is a reprise of his
distractingly clean loss to Kasparov
as Black in Linares. I gave that just
a month ago so here, in the inter-
ests of balance, is Anand's quickplay
victory against Kasparov at Frank-
furt in June. 15 b1! was an im-
provement over 15 0-0 which Anand
played twice against Kasparov in the
Geneva Quickplay 1996 and Anand
annotates 18 Nd1! en route to e3.
Anand got complete control and af-
ter 34 f5, dynamising the d5 square
for his knight, it was all over. At the
end 39...exf5 40 Nd5 fxe4 41 Rxe4!
Bc6 42 Rxe7+ 1-0 Rxe7 43 Nxf6+ Kd8
44 Rxd6+ Kc7 45 Qf4! wins.

White: Viswanathan Anand

Black: Gary Kasparov
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5	21 Kb1 axb3
2 Nf3 d6	22 cxb3 Ra8
3 d4 cxd4	23 Bc3 Ra8
4 Nxd4 Nf6	24 Nc2 Bb8
5 Ne3 a6	25 Nd4 Ra8
6 Bc3 Ng4	26 Nd4 Be7
7 Bg5 h6	27 Rhe1 Qc8
8 Bb4 g5	28 Bh3 Qb7
9 Bg3 Bg7	29 Nd2 f6
10 Be2 h5	30 Ndc4 h4
11 Bxg4 Bxg4	31 g3 g4
12 f3 Bd7	32 f4 Nf5
13 Bf2 Nc6	33 Nxf5 gxf3
14 Qd2 Ne5	34 f5 hxf3
15 h3 e6	35 hxf3 Rxf3
16 Nd2 Rb8	36 Nd2 Rg5
17 Bd4 b5	37 Bc1 Rg7
18 Nd1 Rg8	38 Qh5+ Rf7
19 Ne3 a5	39 Qxd3 1-0
20 0-0-0 a4	

BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

"WHAT DID you do on Board 20?"
asked an excited colleague at the
half-way stage of a recent pairs
event. I recognised the symptoms
instantly - he must have found a
clever play on the board and felt
that there was a danger of its being
overlooked by the press. "We
played in 3 no-trumps and made 11
tricks after a club lead and a silly
defence," I replied. His face fell, but
then he brightened up. "I was the
only declarer to make Four
Hearts!" So I had to ask...

At both of our tables East had
opened One Diamond and South
had overcalled with One Heart. As
North I had suggested no-trumps
and had been realised to game, but
my friend's partner had followed a
different route that had led to the
heart game. West led ♠7 against
Four Hearts and, after taking his
king and ace, East led a third
round. This set declarer problems
for, with ♠A almost certainly
marked with East, he needed three
spade discards from hand and one
of his potential diamond winners
had just been killed.

I had to admit that his solution
was elegant. With only two spade
discards to come, he now needed
the club finesse as well. But this
needed two entries to dummy with-

Game all; dealer East

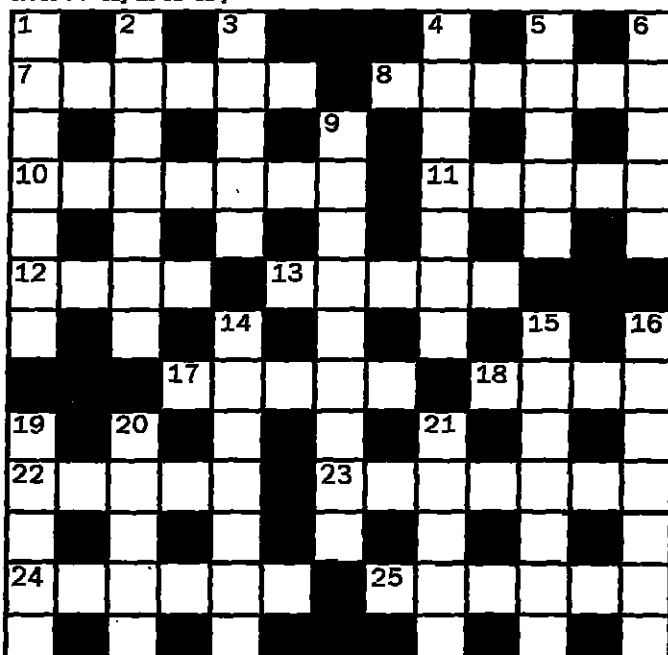
North	
♠K5	
♥K94	
♦Q10932	
♣K73	
East	
♠10642	♥AQ9
♥1032	♦75
♦76	♠AK84
♠10865	♥Q942
South	
♠J873	
♥AQJ86	
♦J5	
♠AJ	

out using ♠K, so declarer ruffed
the third round of diamonds high
and followed with a finesse of ♠9!
This went well and so did the
finesse of ♠7 that followed.

Now it was plain sailing - declar-
er cashed ♠A and drew the
remaining trumps with the ace and
king. Now ♠K and the two remain-
ing diamonds provided enough
tricks for the contract. It is worth
noting that it was better odds to try
the finesse of ♠9 for the required
extra entry rather than hope for the
ten to fall doubleton.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3820 Friday 15 January



ACROSS

- Rotary force (6)
- Gently (6)
- Deity (7)
- Conductor's implement (5)
- Engrave (4)
- Inhale cocaine etc (5)
- Mica (9)
- District (4)
- Insensitive (5)
- Division (7)
- Series of games (6)
- Relating to teeth (6)

DOWN

- Walk unsteadily (7)
- Manufacture (7)
- Subdued (5)
- Theft (7)
- Condition (5)
- Looking at (5)
- Mica (9)
- Shellfish (7)
- Weakness (7)
- Of outstanding goodness (7)
- Oak mat (5)
- Young sheep (5)
- Mass of loose rock (5)

Solution to yesterday's Arcade Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Super, 4 Titan (Superstition), 7 Escalator, 9 Ugly, 10 Kale, 11 Lapel, 13
Kashia, 14 Lately, 15 Fatted, 17 Melkoms, 19 Layer, 20 Blob, 22 Ast, 23 Magnitude, 24
Deadly, 25 Reeled. DOWN: 1 Struck, 2 Easy, 3 Semman, 4 Travel, 5 Took, 6 Namely, 7 B-
low room, 8 Racehorse, 11 Libel, 12 Liner, 15 Fabled, 16 Dainty, 17 Mentor, 18 Gained,
21 Bard, 22 Adze.

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

BBC1 N IRELAND
As BBC1 London except: 6.30
Newsline (630 221).

BBC1 SCOTLAND
As BBC1 London except: 2.55
Luck Is Funn (Moussie and Moe), 3.30
Oraign agus Rannan
(Song and Rhyme) (894218), 3.30
Paddy's Post (Postman Pat) (891080),
6.00 News (647), 6.30 Reporting Scot-
land: Weather (221).

BBC1 WALES
As BBC1 London except: 6.30
Wales Today (221), 12.25 Film: The
Arts of Discipline (8876500), 1.30 Joins
BBC News 24 (817240).

ANGLIA
As Carlton except: 12.20 Anglia
News and Weather (8942931), 1.00
Save Your Bacon (892554), 1.35 Home
and Away (8534408), 2.00 The Jerry
Springer Show (257689), 3.30 Anglia
News and Weather (2950573), 5.30
Shortland Street (856842), 6.00 Home
and Away (76764), 6.25 Anglia News
(81100), 10.30 Anglia News and Weather
(81370), 11.30 Bob Monkhouse on
Campus (41757), 12.30 Prime TV

